

ARCHER-CAPUZZO, SONIA, D.M.A. *Common Ground: Promoting Communication and Fostering Trust Among Israeli Arabs and Jews Through Music*. (2008)
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Most Israeli Arabs and Jews live lives apart. They live in different neighborhoods, attend different schools, and often work in different locations. It is not surprising, then, that there is a lack of basic communication between Jews and Arabs in Israel, which leads to misunderstandings and hostility. Many organizations and groups are trying to bring Israeli Arabs and Jews together to encourage communication and trust. This dissertation explores the role two musical ensembles—Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra—can play to provide common ground, promote communication, and foster trust between Arab and Jewish musicians and audiences.

Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra both contain Israeli Arab and Jewish members and are both based in Tel Aviv, Israel. They perform for Jews and Arabs throughout Israel and play abroad, primarily in Europe and the United States. They perform a mixture of Western classical, Arab art and folk, Jewish folk, and original compositions that combine these styles to emphasize the Arab-Jewish makeup of the ensembles.

Through interviews, travel, and research, I examine the ensembles, their missions, the musicians, the audience, and the music performed. The musical examples discussed in Chapter Three are in the online multimedia portion of this dissertation. In this dissertation, I ask whether Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra succeed in attaining their shared goal of promoting communication and trust between Israeli Arabs and Jews.

COMMON GROUND: PROMOTING COMMUNICATION
AND FOSTERING TRUST AMONG ISRAELI
ARABS AND JEWS THROUGH MUSIC

By
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APPROVAL PAGE

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We have to face the fact that either all of us are going to die together or we are going to learn to live together and if we are to live together we have to talk.

Eleanor Roosevelt

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CHAPTER I

“WHEN BOTH SIDES ARE RIGHT”

“What do you do when both sides are right?” I have heard this question asked several times during discussions about the conflict between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East. In Israel alone, one can argue that the Palestinians should have a right to return to the land of their forebears, and one can make a comparable case that the Jews should stay in the land of their ancestors. Similarly, Israeli Jews, and Arabs in Israel and the Palestinian territories deserve to live safely, unafraid of attack. In fact, these positions are quite similar. Both Arabs and Jews have a desire to live in the same area (today’s Israel), and both hope to live peacefully. For some, living peacefully means that the other side would have to disappear. However, many Arabs and Jews in Israel recognize that they must learn to live together.

How can one possibly help both sides to see that the other has a point? By finding common ground, perhaps Arabs and Jews can discover a way to empathize with one another. Common ground could literally mean the land that both Arabs and Jews claim as their spiritual homeland. However, it can also be a shared interest, experience, or point of view. By finding one common aspect, Arabs and Jews in Israel can begin to see other instances of common ground, other ways in which they are similar, and can coexist

peacefully. The common ground of the Holy Land can potentially become a shared reality as Israeli Arabs and Jews discover another kind of common ground.

Some believe that music can be that common ground. Through the act of music-making, musicians from both sides—Arab and Jewish—can explore a common interest together. It is no coincidence that musical ensembles combining Jewish and Arab members have formed in Israel, and beyond in the case of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, which meets annually in Spain. In this dissertation I will focus on two such ensembles—Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra—both of which endeavor to encourage communication between their Israeli Arab and Jewish members and their audiences. Through this study, I will ask if the act of music-making can provide common ground, promote communication, and foster trust between Israeli Arabs and Jews.¹

I travelled to Israel during the summer of 2007 to meet with members of Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra and to hear them rehearse and perform. I heard several individuals in Israel speak of the “other” in stereotypes (i.e. Arabs are less cultured/sophisticated than Jews, Jews are more uptight than Arabs), but I also

¹ In this paper, I will refer to Arab citizens of Israel primarily as Israeli Arabs. However, many emphasize their identity as Palestinians. I will acknowledge this identity during my discussion of Israel’s modern history. However, Israeli Arab/Palestinian identity is too complex to address fully in this dissertation. For further discussion of Israeli identity issues, see: Smadar Bakovic, *Tall Shadows: Interview with Israeli Arabs* (Lanham, Maryland: Hamilton Books, 2006); Ben Brinner, “Beyond Israelis vs. Palestinians or Jews vs. Arabs: The Social Ramifications of Musical Interactions,” *Music and Anthropology* 8 (2003), online article, accessed 30 April 2007, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, EBSCOhost database; Daniel Lefkowitz, *Words and Stones: The Politics of Language and Identity in Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Laurence Louër, *To Be an Arab in Israel*, translated by John King (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Benny Morris, *1948 and After: Israel and the Palestinians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

encountered those who spoke of their friends from the other side with genuine affection and admiration. I saw lingering signs of the war with Hezbollah, which occurred a year before my visit, during the summer of 2006—rubble spilling from buildings and spent missiles used as public art—but I also heard Israeli musicians speak of supporting each other during the war, during which Hezbollah attacked Israeli Jews and Arabs. The musicians and others I met while in Israel were a complex mixture of personalities and viewpoints.

The combination of personalities and belief systems led some to be more or less open-minded in their perceptions of the “other.” For instance, I heard a couple of older Jewish men, on separate occasions, describe all Arabs as dishonest. These Jewish men were a product of an Israeli Jewish belief that all Arabs are hostile toward all Jews. Tomislav Longinović encountered racism similar to that described above as he researched music and racism in the former Yugoslavia.² He writes that “race” is not always based on the color of one’s skin.³ In Yugoslavia race became a way to divide East from West, Europe from Asia, and Christians from Muslims. The differences between these groups, though often not great, were seen as insurmountable, similar to the apparently insurmountable differences between those with different skin colors. Racism in Israel is similar to that encountered by Longinović. Many see Arabs and Jews as separate groups divided from one another by race. Similarities between the groups are

² Tomislav Longinović, “Music Wars: Blood and Song at the End of Yugoslavia,” in *Music and the Racial Imagination*, ed. Ronald Radano and Philip V. Bohlman (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 622-643.

³ Ibid, 630.

often ignored because differences are emphasized to such a high degree. Labels like “Arab,” “Palestinian,” or “Jew” are applied to a blanket group to highlight their race by others and by those who claim membership to these groups. Some Arab Israelis claim to be Palestinians out of pride and solidarity with the Palestinian Territories, while some Jews label Arab Israelis as Palestinians to express their mistrust of all Arabs. Any Israeli can use Race and ethnicity to emphasize difference or similarity, to express fear or acceptance, and to prolong or fight the continuing Jewish-Arab hostilities in Israel.

Among the musicians with whom I spoke, all were dedicated to their colleagues and friends from the ensembles, whether Jewish or Arab. This is not to say that stereotypes and tensions, like those mentioned above, disappeared. Rather, they seemed less important than the humanity of the musicians’ friends from the other side. The difference between these two perceptions is that the first sees the other side as a large, hostile group, while the second sees a collection of individuals with varying beliefs and values.

Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra are a gathering place for musicians who enjoy performing and want to explore new repertoire, whether it be Western classical, Middle Eastern—Arab and Jewish—art and folk, or a combination of these styles. Music serves as a common interest for the Arab and Jewish musicians. However, these ensembles are also about more than music. They are just as much a product of the hostility in the Middle East as they are of the musicians’ desire to perform new music together. They exist not only to perform music, but also to encourage

meetings, communication, and trust between Israeli Arabs and Jews. Musical performance is an active, public art form, and Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra use these characteristics to promote their message of Arab-Jewish coexistence, communication, and trust.

Thus, both ensembles embody a complex mixture of Arab and Jewish identities and musics. One can argue that complexity of identity could be a weakness in the ensembles, leading to disagreements and strife, as musicians struggle to reconcile their musical, ethnic, religious, intellectual, and other identities. However, it is also possible that the diversity within the ensembles can strengthen them by pointing to unexpected commonalities between musicians.

Is it possible that the act of making music together can lead to better relations between Arab and Jewish musicians in Israel? Can performing together encourage communication and even trust? Can the effects extend to the audience? The members of Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra with whom I spoke have varying answers to these questions. All of them have formed friendships with musicians from the other side through these projects. They are less sure about the affect these ensembles have on audience members, whether they are Israeli (Jewish or Arab), American, European, young, or old. In this dissertation, I will delve into the complexity of the ensembles' missions and members, their music, and their audiences, to try to discover if music-making can indeed provide common ground, promote communication, and foster trust between Israeli Arabs and Jews.

A Brief History of Modern Israel

In order to understand the significance of the Arab-Jewish conflict within Israel, it is important to understand modern Israel's history. In 1917-1918, the British and their allies captured Palestine from the crumbling Ottoman Empire. Palestine became a British Mandate. At the time, Palestine was predominantly Arab, though a growing Jewish population existed in the area. Many Jews lived in Jerusalem because of the religious significance of the city, while others lived in scattered settlements in Northern Israel, especially around the Sea of Galilee.⁴ A small population of Jews also lived in the port city of Jaffa, which today is located just south of Tel Aviv.

In the late 1800s, Jewish nationalism, or Zionism, began to take shape in Europe. An important part of Zionism was the belief that Jews should return to their homeland and religious center of Palestine to escape persecution elsewhere in the world and build a Jewish religious, cultural, and political community. Zionism fueled Jewish immigration to Palestine throughout the early twentieth century, especially as Nazi persecution escalated before and during World War II. As more Jews entered Palestine, Arab and Jewish factions battled for control of the Mandate. Rebellion simmered just below the surface for years, until finally boiling over in 1945. The United Nations stepped in and proposed a partition plan for the Palestinian Mandate in 1947 (see Figure 1).

⁴ Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel from the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*, 2nd ed., (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 24. Hereafter Sachar.



Figure 1: 1947 United Nations Partition Plan of the Mandate of Palestine⁵

Under the U.N. Partition Plan, Jerusalem would be an international city, controlled by the U.N. About 45 percent of the new Jewish state would be Arab, while one percent of the Palestinian state would be Jewish.⁶ Both sides greeted the Partition Plan with strong opposition, and civil war broke out in Palestine. On May 14, 1948, in Tel Aviv, David Ben-Gurion and a group of Jewish government ministers declared Israel an independent Jewish state. The announcement was followed within hours by formal

⁵ 1947 UN Partition Plan, Answers.com, accessed 11 October 2007, available at <http://www.answers.com/topic/1947-un-partition-plan>.

⁶ William Ochsenwald and Sydney Nettleton Fisher, *The Middle East: A History*, 6th ed. (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004), 536. Hereafter Ochsenwald and Fisher.

recognition of Israel by the United States and the Soviet Union. On May 15, 1948, the First Arab-Israeli War broke out as members of the Arab League pitted themselves against the new state of Israel.⁷

Israel won the First Arab-Israeli war in large part because of the unity of the diasporic Jewish community post-Holocaust, and their determination to live in an independent Jewish state. Fragmentation among the Arab states contributed as well. The Arab League members lacked a central leader during the war, which led to a disintegration of coordination between the Arab states fighting Israel. Because of the war, Israel gained territory and a firmer position as an independent nation. The Jews of Israel (as well as Jews still living abroad, such as in the United States or Europe) gained further confidence and determination to defend the country. Around 700,000 Palestinian Arabs fled the country, becoming refugees.⁸ Most of the refugees found sanctuary in the Arab states surrounding Israel, most notably Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon. Only about 150,000 Arabs remained in Israel, living under military rule until 1966. While Palestinians in Israel and Jordan became citizens of these countries, most other countries in the Middle East did not grant Palestinians citizenship. In Lebanon, refugees were denied citizenship because the influx of Muslim Palestinians would have tipped a delicate balance between the ruling Christians and the growing Muslim population in the country. In other countries, such as Egypt, leaders hoped that the Palestinians would soon go home, rather

⁷ The Arab League was founded in the 1940s by several Arab countries, including Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq. It is still in existence today. The Arab League, or more formally, The League of Arab Nations, endeavors to promote the interests of member Arab states.

⁸ Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 602. Hereafter Morris.

than placing a financial burden on already struggling states. Today, large populations of noncitizen Palestinian refugees continue to survive throughout the Middle East.

The conflict between Arab countries and the Israeli state continued into the 1980s, when the Fifth Arab-Israeli War ended. Conflict between Israel's government and Palestinian organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah continue today. There were periods of relative peace over the decades, but border raids, five Arab-Israeli wars, and two intifadas consistently interrupted them.⁹ The intifadas, literally "shaking off," were a protest by Palestinians against Israeli rule in the occupied territories. Both intifadas turned violent, ending in numerous casualties, especially on the Palestinian side. The intifadas became especially troubling for Israel as Arab Israeli citizens joined the protests. Though Israel managed to win each of the wars, and to put down the protestors in the intifadas, the constant conflict continued to erode relations between Arabs and Jews within Israel and throughout the Middle East.

On September 13, 1993, there seemed to be hope, according to American, Israeli, and Palestinian leaders, for a resolution between Palestinians and Israelis.¹⁰ Jewish Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat signed a peace agreement in Washington D.C. after intense negotiations. The PLO began taking more responsibility and control in the Palestinian territories. Israeli and Palestinian leaders and the United States hoped that controversial issues like the right of

⁹ The five Arab-Israeli wars occurred in 1948-49 (first), 1956 (second), 1967 (third), 1973 (fourth), 1978-1983 (fifth). The intifadas occurred in 1987 (first) and 2000 (second). More information on the Arab-Israeli wars and intifadas can be found in Sachar; Ochsenwald and Fisher; Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim, ed., *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹⁰ Sachar, 994-997.

return of Palestinian refugees and control of Jerusalem might eventually be resolved as goodwill increased. However, there was resistance on both sides to the peace process from those who feared giving up too much (or anything) to the other. On November 4, 1995, the peace process was derailed when a Jewish Israeli religious nationalist assassinated Prime Minister Rabin. It is surprising to many that a fellow Jew assassinated Rabin. However, this shows the divisions within Jewish culture in Israel, which I will address later as a significant factor in the continuing conflict, along with divisions in Arab Israeli culture.

Israel's Jewish and Arab Population

Demographics in Israel have played an important role in its history since its time as a British Mandate. The population balance between Jews and Arabs in the area has been a driving force in the hostilities, not only in Israel, but throughout other areas of the Middle East as well. After World War I, Palestine contained approximately 620,000 Muslims and 70,000 Christians who were primarily Arabs linguistically and culturally.¹¹ Sixty-thousand Jews lived in Palestine, many of whom were also Arab in their language and cultural practices. Arab identity centers on the Arab language but extends to cultural practices, such as music, which will be discussed later. As Jewish immigration to Palestine increased, and especially as a result of the 1948-1949 Arab-Israeli War, the

¹¹ Ochsenwald and Fisher, 448.

population balance tipped in favor of Jews. The Jews formed a majority in the new Jewish state by 1949 (see Table 1).

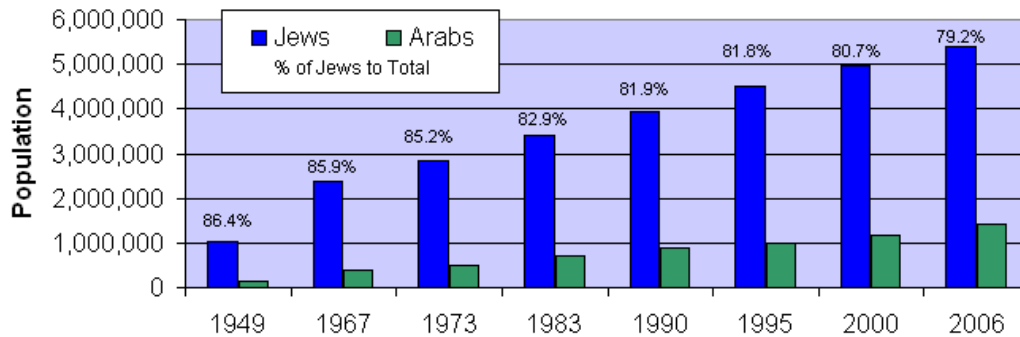


Table 1: Arab-Jewish Population of Israel 1949-2006¹²

The Jewish majority pictured in Table 1 is obvious, but what is less obvious at first is the growing Arab minority. In 1949, Jews made up about 86 percent of the total population of Israel, but in 2006, that number had fallen to around 79 percent, while Arabs made up almost 21 percent of Israel's total population.¹³ While Israel has been a "Jewish" nation from its inception in 1948,¹⁴ there is a significant and growing Israeli

¹² "Population Statistics," Israeli-Palestinian ProCon.org website, accessed 12 October 2007, available at <http://www.israelipalestinianprocon.org/populationpalestine.html>. These statistics do not include populations in the Gaza Strip or West Bank.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Examples of Israel's "Jewish" character include the flag, featuring a Star of David, and the official state language of Hebrew.

Arab minority, which contributes to the character of Israeli society in important ways, including musically.¹⁵

The Difficulty of Defining Israeli Arabs and Jews

Separating Israeli Arabs and Jews into two distinct factions is difficult, if not impossible. Complex sets of differences and similarities within the Jewish and Arab groups divide each into numerous subgroups. Furthermore, overlaps among these subgroups underline shared cultural characteristics between Jews and Arabs.

Arab identity, centered on the Arabic language, began to coalesce and become Arab nationalism throughout the Middle East in the late 1800s under Ottoman rule.¹⁶ In this case, nationalism was not based on a shared citizenship in one country, but on a shared citizenship in a language and cultural group. The importance of Arabic was due primarily to its use as the language of the *Qur'an* and Islam. However, not all Arab speakers were or are Muslims; a significant number of Christians in Israel and throughout the Middle East are Arabs. In addition to a common language, many Arabs share aspects of culture, such as music, dress, diet, or poetry. For instance, the music of many Arab subgroups feature instruments such as the *'ud* or *ney* and are written in a heterophonic texture, featuring a single melody played by all musicians, with no harmony. Perhaps

¹⁵ Giles Kepel, "Forward," in *To Be an Arab in Israel*, Laurence Louër, translated by John King (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), vii.

¹⁶ Morris, 9.

even more confusing, some Jews, as will be discussed below, identify strongly with Arab culture and language.¹⁷

Arab nationalism intensified in many areas of the Middle East because of the Mandate System after World War II. In Palestine, though, there was an added stimulus. As more Jews immigrated to Palestine, bringing their own brand of nationalism, Zionism, the Arab majority felt threatened not only by the Jewish settlers but also by their Zionist supporters in Europe and later the United States. Zionism before World War II focused on establishing a homeland for the Jews in Palestine, in response to increasing anti-Semitism, especially in Europe. Since the establishment of Israel, Zionism has concentrated on preserving and strengthening the Jewish state.

Arab nationalism did not overcome the powerful internal divisions in Palestinian Arab society, however, which weakened the Arabs in the face of Zionist unity at the time. The divisions felt by Arabs, and later strengthened by the Israeli government, were and are primarily along religious lines, between Muslims, Christians, and Druze.¹⁸ Further divisions have opened in recent years between extremists who wish to rid the Middle East of Jews, and those more moderate Arabs who wish to live peacefully.

¹⁷ Yossi Arnheim, principle flutist with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble, interview by author, 10 July 2007, Herzliah, Israel, digital recording. Hereafter Arnheim, interview; Peter Marck, principal double bassist of the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra and Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble, interview by author, 13 July 2007, Tel Aviv, Israel, digital recording. Hereafter Marck, interview. For further discussion of Jewish Arabs, see Sachar, and Oschenwald and Fischer.

¹⁸ Druze are members of an Arab monotheistic religious sect, which combines elements of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism. Ben Brinner, "Beyond Israelis vs. Palestinians or Jews vs. Arabs: The Social Ramifications of Musical Interactions," *Music and Anthropology* 8 (2003), online article, accessed 30 April 2007, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, EBSCOhost database, subsection: "Introduction," 3. Hereafter Brinner.

Jewish ethnicity is based on Judaism. However, while all Jews share a religious history, not all practice Judaism, or practice it in the same ways. As Jews immigrated to Palestine in the early twentieth century, Zionist leaders came up with ways to tie the Jewish people together beyond religion. One strategy was to revive the Hebrew language, which is the national language of Israel today. The nation's flag, featuring a Star of David, is another affirmation of the Jewish character of Israel, pointing to the shared religious roots of the Jewish people.

In spite of a shared religious history and official state language, Jews in Israel are increasingly at odds with one another, as new immigrants arrive from all over the world. Ashkenazi, Mizrahi, and Sephardic Jews share a basic religious heritage, but they were physically separated centuries ago when the Romans expelled the Jews from Palestine.¹⁹ Ashkenazim are the descendants of Jews who made their home in Europe and tended to lived as a minority under Christian rule. Mizrahim, or Oriental, Jews settled throughout the Middle East, living under Muslim rule beside Arab Muslims and Christians. Sephardim originally found a home in Spain, where they lived under Muslim rule for a time. They were later forced to flee to areas of Northern African and the Middle East by the ruling Spanish Catholics and the Inquisition. More recently, Russian Jews have arrived in Israel after years under oppressive Orthodox Christian and Communist rule. Though they are all Jews, these subgroups come from different areas of the world, where

¹⁹ Zion Zohar, "A Global Perspective on Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry: An Introductory Essay," in *Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry: From the Golden Age of Spain to Modern Times*, ed. Zion Zohar, 3-22 (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 3-22.

they spoke different languages, lived with different ethnic groups, experienced different levels of freedom and oppression, and enjoyed different art and music. Additionally, divisions between ultra-orthodox, moderate, and secular Jews, who wish to see varying degrees of religious control of the government and have different opinions about living peacefully with the Arabs, cause further tension and division within the Jewish ethnic group.

The religious and ethnic schisms within Arab and Jewish society contribute to the wider conflict between Arabs and Jews within Israel. Internal conflicts between different Jewish groups led to the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin by a Jewish Israeli. Jewish and Arab leaders are reluctant to reach out to the other side because they risk further fragmentation within their own groups (e.g. conflict between Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Jewish groups who wish to withdraw settlements from the Palestinian territories). By trying to emphasize similarities within their groups, Jews and Arabs highlight the perceived differences—positions of power, language, religion—between the Arab and Jewish Israelis. They disregard the fact that many Jews and Arabs lived peacefully together for centuries in the Middle East, that many Jews and Arabs share a language, whether it be Hebrew and/or Arabic, and that they actually share many religious beliefs, whether they are Muslim, Jewish, or Christian. Because of the numerous schisms within Jewish and Arab society and the emphasis on dissimilarity between the two groups, we see a highly fragmented society in which differences are emphasized and fear of the other is pronounced.

Separation in Israeli Society

In the Palestinian Mandate, Jews and Arabs lived apart from one another.²⁰ The separation was so great that they were unable to write a constitution or establish an independent government without British involvement. This segregation of Jews and Arabs did not cease in the new state of Israel. In fact, today most Israeli Arabs and Jews live in different neighborhoods or towns and go to different schools.²¹

One can see the segregation of Arabs and Jews in Israel in where they tend to live. As of 2003, about 46 percent of Israeli Arabs inhabited the Northern district of Israel, where they made up a slight majority over Jews at 52 percent of the total population of the area.²² Another significant number of Israeli Arabs lived in the Jerusalem and Haifa districts. Notably for my research, only about four percent of all Israeli Arabs lived in the Tel Aviv district, which is where Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra are based (see Figure 2).

The Arab population in Israel, growing at a faster rate than the Jewish population, makes ignoring the presence of Arabs difficult for Jews. It is this realization—that there is a significant Arab minority within Israel who have a place in the country and a unique cultural voice—that has contributed to the formation of groups such as Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra. The musicians of these ensembles and many Israelis like them believe that living separated lives will only make the conflict

²⁰ Ochsenwald and Fisher, 455.

²¹ Sammy Smooha, *Arabs and Jews in Israel: Volume 1, Conflicting and Shared Attitudes in a Divided Society* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), 94.

²² Nurit Yaffe, “The Arab Population in Israel, 2003,” The Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel website, accessed 14 September 2007, available at www.cbs.gov.il.

between Israeli Arabs and Jews worse. Thus, they try to find a common ground, a shared interest that can bring Jews and Arabs together in one place, and perhaps open up lines of communication and foster trust between participants.

Music-making can be a powerful experience, especially for the musicians involved. Is it possible for this shared experience to provide common ground for musicians and audience members of different ethnicities and different musical training? Can music-making promote communication between two groups who rarely meet to communicate in any way? Can this experience foster trust between Israeli Arabs and Jews? Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra are trying to achieve these goals. In this dissertation, I will ask how they use music and music-making to provide a common ground for Arab and Jewish Israelis, and I will ask if they are successful in this endeavor.

The title of each of the following chapters is a quote within that chapter from one of the ensemble members with whom I spoke and/or corresponded via e-mail. These quotes are cited in the chapter when they appear in the text.

In Chapter Two: “The More Contact We Have of This Sort, the Better,” I will introduce Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra and their mission statements. I will discuss Tel Aviv, as it is the home-base for the ensembles and a center of cultural and financial activity in Israel. I will also explain my research methods, focusing on my visit to Israel and interviews.

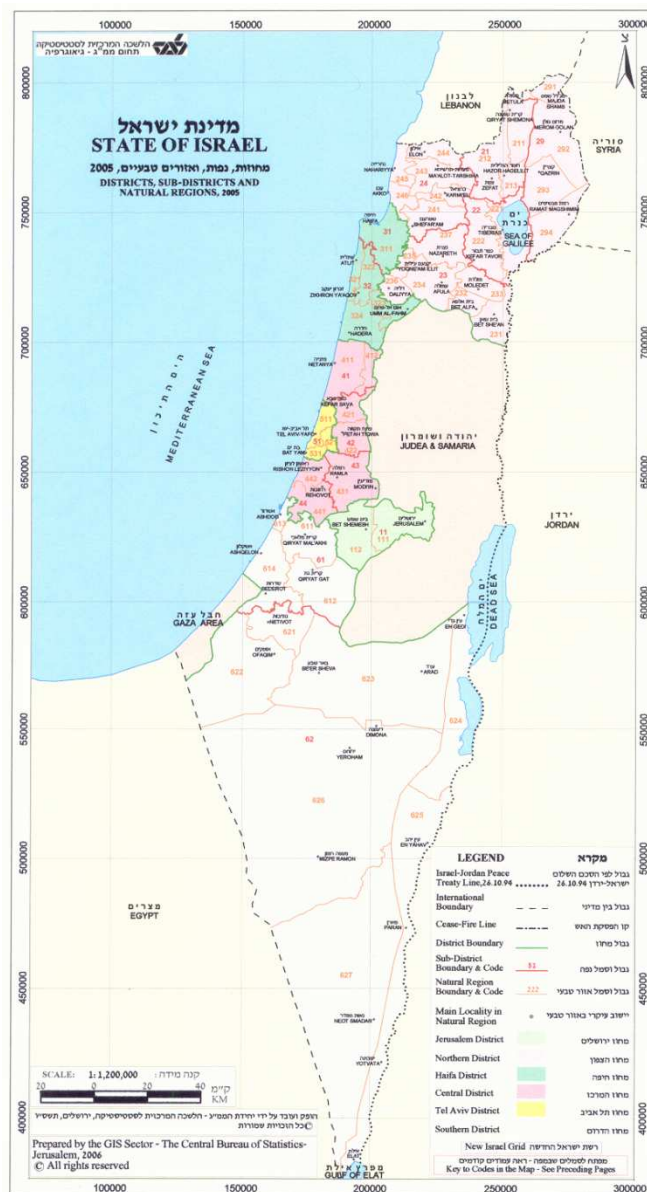


Figure 2: Israel's Districts²³

²³ "State of Israel: Districts, Sub-Districts, and Natural Regions, 2005," GIS Sector, The Central Bureau of Statistics-Jerusalem, 2006, accessed 14 September 2007, available at www.cbs.gov.il.

In Chapter Three: “It’s a Way to Show the Multicultural Point,” I will go into detail about the music of Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra. I will focus on a few specific works performed live and recorded by each of the groups, asking how the musical sounds are used to promote communication (or serve as communication) for the musicians and audience. Visual images, whether they are program covers or album cover art, are also important for the message these groups are trying to send, so I will investigate these images. Finally, I will look at the marketing strategies of each group, asking how they use music, language, and visual images to promote the ensembles and Arab-Jewish communication.

In Chapter Four: “Inspired by This Idea of Jews and Arabs Being Together,” I will explore the identities of the members of the ensembles and their audiences. I will also look at who financially backs these ensembles to shed light on who the audience members are and who supports these ensembles and their goals. Building on the discussion of music and marketing in Chapter Three, I will ask what benefit these ensembles can provide, who benefits, and why.

In Chapter Five: “We Play Music Together” [underline in original e-mail correspondence], I will address whether Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra meet their goals to increase communication and trust among their members and audiences through musical-making. I will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of using music in these types of projects. I will also investigate whether other types of activities, such as theater or sports, could obtain the same or similar results. I will base my

assessment on interviews with ensemble members and administrators, research, and my personal observations.

Chapter Six: “Some Things You Just Feel,” will provide a conclusion to the dissertation. I will ask what Shesh Besh, The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, and other organizations like them can add to the peace process in Israel, and if these projects hinder the peace process in any way. I will address my future research plans, focusing on music and communication in Israel. I will also briefly explore other research possibilities in related areas, such as music and communication in other areas of the world and/or with other groups in conflict.

CHAPTER II

“THE MORE CONTACT WE HAVE OF THIS SORT, THE BETTER”

The Ensembles

Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble

Yossi Arnheim, principal flutist in the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (IPO), and three other Israeli Jewish musicians founded Shesh Besh in 1996.²⁴ The repertoire was originally Middle Eastern/Arab music. The name “Shesh Besh,” which literally translates to “six-five,” came from a Turkish game similar to backgammon. The musicians chose the name “Shesh Besh” to evoke the Arab/Middle Eastern character of the ensemble’s repertoire, and its playful association with a popular game throughout the Middle East was designed to catch the attention of possible fans. In fact, at the Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble performance that I attended in Tel Aviv on 15 July 2007, the ensemble’s name inspired chuckles from the audience.

A few years after Shesh Besh was founded, the Keynote educational program of the IPO was established.²⁵ Keynote originated to enrich the music education of young Israelis. IPO musicians visited Israeli schools, playing and talking about music. Keynote also arranged concerts in Tel Aviv at the IPO’s Mann Auditorium for families and school

²⁴ Yossi Arnheim, “Yossi Arnheim Flute,” website, available at <http://www.arnheim.info/>, “Shesh Besh.” Shesh Besh released a CD in 1998 with Enja Records titled “Shesh Besh.”

²⁵ Arnheim, interview.

groups. Irit Rub-Levy, head of Keynote, decided that playing only Western classical music in the schools left out a number of Israelis, so she approached Yossi, other members of the IPO, and Arab Israeli musicians about a way to expand the repertoire taught by Keynote.²⁶ Yossi described how Keynote changed the course of Shesh Besh:

. . . one of the things that the manager of the Keynote program [Irit] wanted to do is get the presence of the Israel Philharmonic also in the Arab communities. And she looked for a way to do it, and the way she thought was good was to . . . form a group that could go into the schools and be a binational group. So it would be Arabs and Jews together, and we could go into Jewish schools and [Arab] schools as well.²⁷

Shesh Besh thus became a part of the IPO's education work in 2000. As a "binational" group, Arab musicians joined the Jewish members of the ensemble, and it became Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble. Prominent Israeli Arab musicians were invited to join Shesh Besh for two reasons: First, they brought a deep understanding of Middle Eastern music won over years of immersion in and study of Arab musics. Second, they brought diversity (Jews *and* Arabs onstage together) to Shesh Besh that has become a core of the ensemble's identity.

Yossi's use of the word "binational" to describe Shesh Besh's Jewish and Arab makeup is not based on Israeli nationality. Shesh Besh is made up only of Israeli citizens, which means that the Arabs and Jews share an Israeli nationality. However, Arabs and

²⁶ Irit Rub-Levy, director of Keynote, the music education program of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, interview by author, 11 July 2007, digital recording. Hereafter Rub-Levy, interview.

²⁷ Arnheim, interview.

Jews are often described as two different nations, referring to a national identity based on ethnicity rather than place of citizenship. This is related in part to the existence of a Palestinian people who claim a national identity though they do not have a state. It is also due to the labeling of Israel as a Jewish state, which can create confusion about the national identities of non-Jewish citizens. Yossi uses “binational” here to emphasize that Shesh Besh hopes to cross perceived borders between Arabs and Jews, rather than separating them into two nations.

Shesh Besh originally contained four instrumentalists playing the Western transverse flute, the *‘ud*, the double bass, and Western and Arab percussion.²⁸ Once Arabs joined the group, the instrumentation expanded to include, two violins or violin and viola (depending on the piece), Western transverse flute, *ney*, *‘ud*, double bass, and Arab percussion. Today, the group has seven regular members and is often joined by Haya Samir, a prominent Israeli vocalist.

The ensemble’s role in music education in Israel is unique. While most of the IPO’s educational programs focus on Western classical music, Shesh Besh branches out to include Middle Eastern/Arab music and original works that blended Western and Middle Eastern elements. The members of Shesh Besh favor the label “Middle Eastern” over “Arab” for Arab art and folk music because they assert that Arabs and Jews in the Middle East performed and enjoyed the music for centuries.

²⁸ Instruments listed above and discussed later in this dissertation are listed and explained in Appendix B.

Because Shesh Besh combines Jewish and Arab musicians and repertoire, it is a way to show school children, and perhaps a wider audience, a model of coexistence while teaching them about music. Zubin Mehta, conductor of the IPO, said of Shesh Besh, “They are our small, little, minuscule effort to prove to people that our two entities can live together, at least by making music together.”²⁹ Irit Rub-Levy put it another way, saying, “the mission is to say, ‘We are friends. We are colleagues. We are partners. It doesn’t matter if we are Arabs or Jews. We are equal, and we have a common denominator.’”³⁰

The professional musicians who perform in Shesh Besh are drawn to the ensemble for the opportunity to meet and perform with the “other.” The “other” in this case is a group of people who are not “us.” For Israeli Jews and Arabs, who do not always have the opportunity to meet and work together, the “other” remains a vague blanket group that includes all Jews or all Arabs. Meeting each other in Shesh Besh gives the musicians an opportunity to create an “us” as an ensemble as they get to know the “other.”

The musicians are also attracted to the repertoire and the chance to play with incredibly talented performers. As Peter Marck, double bassist in Shesh Besh and the IPO, put it, “For the players, the ensemble is an opportunity to play completely different

²⁹ Zubin Mehta, conductor of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, speech at the awards ceremony for Shesh/Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble, Tel-Aviv, Israel, 15 July 2007, digital recording. Hereafter Mehta.

³⁰ Rub-Levy, interview.

and ‘foreign’ music, both for the ‘Western’ players and the ‘Eastern’ players.”³¹ Peter asserts that the musicians get to play “completely different” music, and at times, this is true. Some of the Jewish musicians studied only Western classical styles, and Middle Eastern folk or art music was new to them when they joined Shesh Besh. Some of the Arab musicians played only Middle Eastern music by ear, and learning to play Western classical music from notated parts was often a new experience. For others, like Sami Khshiboun, who is fluent in Western and Middle Eastern styles of music, the newness comes from the chance to play original works written for the ensemble.³²

Peter refers to “Western” and “Eastern” performers in the quote above. This is his way of trying to talk about the different musical roots of the musicians. However, defining one performer in the group as “Western” and another as “Eastern,” or even “Middle Eastern,” is a difficult distinction to make. All of the performers are Middle Easterners by virtue of the fact that they live in Israel. Even defining the styles of music as “Western” or “Eastern/Middle Eastern” is a bit misleading since there are composers in the Middle East combining elements of these musical styles in works written for the concert stage. Is this hybrid musical style “Western” because it is performed by an orchestra or chamber group onstage, or is it “Middle Eastern” because it incorporates Middle Eastern stylistic elements? The closer one looks, the more the distinctions between the musics and the musicians seem insufficient and unrealistic. As I will discuss

³¹ Peter Marck, principle double bassist with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble, e-mail correspondence with author, 25 June 2007. Hereafter Marck, correspondence.

³² Sami Khshiboun, violinist with Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble, interview by author, 15 July 2007, Tel Aviv, Israel, digital recording. Hereafter Khshiboun, interview.

throughout this dissertation, Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra endeavor to show the impracticality of labels like “Western,” “Arab,” “Middle Eastern,” etc. At the same time, they must use these labels because it is difficult to explain the ensembles and their goals without them.

Shesh Besh hopes to provide a model for other Arab-Jewish musical groups. Mehta’s earlier quote calls the ensemble a “small, little, minuscule effort.”³³ Mehta describes the ensemble as a “minuscule effort” to emphasize the fact that Israel needs other projects like Shesh Besh if Arabs and Jews hope to continue learning to communicate with one another.

The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra

The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra exists under the auspices of Jeunesses Musicales International (JMI). JMI is a non-profit, non-government organization founded in 1945 that supports music programs for young people throughout the world, such as music camps, youth orchestras, and live performances in schools and concert halls of a variety of musics including Western classical, jazz, pop, and what JMI’s website terms “ethnic” styles.³⁴ In this way, JMI “seeks to empower young people through music—as musicians, listeners and organisers [sic].”³⁵

³³ Mehta.

³⁴ “Jeunesses Musicales International,” website, accessed 15 September 2007, available at <http://www.jmi.net>. Hereafter JMI website.

³⁵ Ibid.

Jeunesses Musicales Israel was founded in 1957. The Israel branch of JMI sponsors music camps, concerts in schools, and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, which was founded in 2002.³⁶ The orchestra consists of twenty members between the ages of 15 and 25. Approximately half the musicians are Israeli Arabs and half Israeli Jews. Additionally, the leadership of the orchestra is split. The director of the program, Meir Wiesel, is an Israeli Jew, while the conductor of the orchestra, Wisam Gibran, is an Israeli Arab.

The instrumentation of the ensemble varies depending on the members, but there are always combinations of instruments associated with Western classical and Middle Eastern musics. I attended a youth orchestra concert on 8 July 2007 at which 15 of the musicians performed. The instrumentation was five violins, one cello, two double basses, one *'ud*, one clarinet, one flute, two recorders, and a *tablah/dumbak*.

Gibran leads the group as conductor, which is unusual for Middle Eastern music but not for Western. A conductor is necessary for two reasons: First, the ensemble is a large chamber group, and a conductor lends security to performances and perspective to rehearsals of an ensemble this large. Second, the musicians in the youth orchestra are amateur performers with less performing experience than the members of Shesh Besh, so an experienced, adult conductor can provide confidence and knowledge.

The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, like Shesh Besh, combines Arab and Jewish musicians and repertoire to promote Arab-Jewish communication between the musicians

³⁶ "Youth and Music Israel," website, accessed 15 September 2007, available at <http://youth-music.org.il/english.htm>. Hereafter "Youth and Music Israel" website.

and their audiences. The mission of the youth orchestra, as stated on its website, is to have “young musicians meet and perform for mutual music making and practicing a peaceful dialogue between the two people.”³⁷

Again like Shesh Besh, a goal of the youth orchestra is to see their project emulated by others. Meir Wiesel emphasized the importance of this goal:

There are many projects in bridging over conflicts, not only in Israel, but all over the world. Like you create a group of people, they talk about the conflict, and then after a few days they go home. Maybe some of them will keep contact somehow, but here is a group of people who do it two times a month, three times a month, who know [each other], who travel together. So this is something where you see the coexistence live, and the more contact we have of this sort, the better.³⁸

Meir thought it was important that the musicians in the youth orchestra meet regularly to “keep contact.” This is an aspect of the ensemble that he hopes other projects might copy because more contact with the other side is central to learning to communicate with and trust one another. Meir also mentions that in the youth orchestra, one sees the “coexistence live.” Both ensembles share this idea, and I will explore it in more detail later in this dissertation. In short, the musicians believe that spending time together is very important, but it is also important to play on stage for audiences, who can see Jews and Arabs working together.

³⁷ “Youth and Music Israel” website.

³⁸ Meir Wiesel, director of The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, interview by author, 15 July 2007, Tel Aviv, Israel, digital recording. Hereafter Wiesel, interview.

Choosing the Ensembles

I chose to study Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra in part because of their similarities, as can be seen in their mixed membership, mixed repertoire, and shared goals. I was also drawn by the fact that both were based in Israel, at the center of a heated Arab-Jewish conflict. That they were both based in Tel Aviv was in part a result of Tel Aviv's place as the cultural capital of Israel, and a consequence of time constraints during my short stay in Israel.

I also chose to study these two groups because of their differences. Shesh Besh consists of professional musicians, who join the ensemble just as much for a job and a chance to play new music as for a chance to meet the "other." Conversely, the youth orchestra contains of young people who volunteer for the ensemble in part for the musical experience and in part to meet the "other." This difference in membership influences the repertoire of each group in some ways. For instance, Shesh Besh members play more music that is not notated, but rather memorized as a group and augmented by improvisation, while the youth orchestra plays more written music, with some improvised sections. By and large, the Arab musical tradition is an oral one, in which pieces of music and playing techniques are passed down from generation to generation through demonstration and practice. This differs from the Western classical tradition, which much Jewish folk music emulates, in which pieces are notated. In Shesh Besh, the professional musicians have years of experience to build upon, so the Arab musicians can learn to read music if need be, and the Jewish musicians can learn Arab pieces by memory and

techniques through experimentation. In the youth orchestra, the musicians are younger and less experienced, so learning pieces without notated music can prove quite difficult, as some musicians may be left behind.

Interviews and Meetings

In July of 2007, I set off for Israel. In Newark Airport, instead of finding a gate surrounded by a waiting area, food vendors, and the bustling activity of passengers for other flights, I encountered a “security area” blocked off from the rest of the international terminal. Passengers bound for Tel Aviv began going through security at 9:30 p.m. for a 10:50 p.m. flight. We were scanned with hand-held metal detectors, had our bags tested for explosive residue, and then checked in for our flight . . . again. I was struck by the fact that I went through so much more security to fly to Israel than I had to travel any time before, even on international flights. The added security drove home the complexity of the situation I was studying. Arab-Jewish relations in the Middle East do not just affect Jews and Arabs in the Middle East; they influence what happens throughout the rest of the world, even down to airport security in the United States.

I sat next to an Israeli Jewish man on the flight to Tel Aviv, who pointed out the landmarks of Israel as we came in to land. He showed me the Jerusalem area up in the mountains. Then, as the plane turned, he pointed out the Mediterranean Sea and a few moments later, Tel Aviv, sitting on the coast. Tel Aviv looked a lot like any other city from the air. Skyscrapers, urban sprawl and highway networks were all clearly visible.

Tel Aviv is a young city within a young country. At the end of World War I, it only contained 2,000 inhabitants and was a suburb of the primarily-Arab port city of Jaffe.³⁹ By 1939, Tel Aviv had grown to include 150,000 people and was called “the only purely Jewish city in the world.”⁴⁰ It was already the center of cultural life for Jews, and was an industrial hub of Palestine. Today, Tel Aviv is larger still, with nearly 400,000 residents within the city, and more than 3,000,000 in the surrounding area.⁴¹ As the home of the IPO, numerous art museums, and theaters, Tel Aviv remains a hub for Jewish cultural activity in Israel. It is still a primarily, though not purely, Jewish city, as only about four percent of Arab Israelis live in or near Tel Aviv. This served to limit my research because I was only in Israel for a few weeks, and I stayed in Tel Aviv for most of that time. By staying in Tel Aviv, I could easily meet with Jewish musicians and attend concerts, but my contact with Arab musicians, and Arabs in general, was limited. I was only able to interview one Arab musician (Sami Khshiboun) and corresponded via e-mail with another (Wisam Matanis). Within this apparently limited scope, however, I continually encountered variety. The musicians with whom I spoke play Arab/Middle Eastern music and Western classical music and enjoy performing with other talented musicians, Jewish and Arab.

This was different from the intolerance I sometimes encountered. For instance, I met a businessman in Tel Aviv who gave me a lot of information about the city. He was

³⁹ Ochsenwald and Fisher, 451.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ “Israel City Population,” website, (Thomas Brinkhoff, 2007), accessed 23 October 2007, available at <http://www.citypopulation.de/Israel.html>.

very friendly and helpful, and he spoke warmly of the American and European tourists he met over the years. However, when the topic turned to Israeli Arabs, specifically a few people I was in contact with in Jerusalem about possible hotel accommodations, he described “those people” as shifty businessmen who could not be trusted. He also told stories about Arab taxi drivers swindling tourists, warning me that I should be sure my driver was Jewish.

I also observed many striking contrasts, which underlined the variety and divisions within Jewish society. I stayed in downtown Tel Aviv on a major thoroughfare called Dizengoff Street, a short walk from the beach. Dizengoff is a primarily commercial street, with stylish cafés, book stores, and clothing stores. In one storefront window, I saw yarmulkes and prayer shawls displayed alongside feather boas and fishnet stockings. At another time, I saw a man driving a motorcycle in only a Speedo bathing suit with a bikini-clad woman behind him, while on the other side of the street, three Orthodox Jewish men in dark suits and hats were waiting to cross. In both these cases, and many others, I saw the cultural diversity of Israel.

While I primarily met Jews in Tel Aviv, I still saw differences in religious beliefs and practices, political beliefs, and expression of identity. I also saw diversity in Jerusalem, which I visited for a day. In addition to numerous tourists, I saw Orthodox Jews dressed in conservative black suits or dresses and other Jews dressed more casually, resembling the tourists in their slacks or skirts and short-sleeved shirts. In the Muslim and Christian Quarters of Jerusalem’s Old City, I also saw a variety of Arabs. Some wore

head coverings, but others did not. My observations in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem highlighted the complexities of Jewish and Arab Israeli culture.

Throughout the research and writing process, I have struggled with language. Labels like “Jew” and “Arab” help define who a musician is, and they can serve to highlight the ensembles’ goals of bringing different groups together. However, labels can also serve to divide the musicians. Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra hope to create communities in which one’s identity as a musician comes first, and identifying as a Jew or an Arab comes later. Capturing the complexities of identity—the similarities and the differences—proves challenging, as one tries to highlight commonalities while respecting the individual.

Further, religious identities—primarily Jewish, Muslim, and Christian in Israel—add complexity to my research. Religion was not a strong identifier for the musicians with whom I spoke. When they introduced themselves, they usually identified as musicians first, ensemble members second, and ethnic Jews or Arabs third. We did not discuss religion. Only Bishara Naddaf, percussionist with Shesh Besh (who I could not meet or interview on this trip to Israel) identifies his religious affiliation as a Christian in the musician bios included in the program notes of Shesh Besh’s CD, *Collective Memory*.⁴² Peter pointed out that the three Arab members of Shesh Besh are all Christians—Coptic, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic.⁴³ At this time, the group does not

⁴² Peter Marck, liner notes, *Collective Memory*, Shesh Besh, The Arab-Jewish Ensemble, under the auspices of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (KeyNote-IPO, ACUM, 2007) compact disc. Hereafter Marck, liner notes.

⁴³ Marck, correspondence, 7 April 2008.

include any Arab Muslims. The religious beliefs of the members of Shesh Besh—Jewish or Christian— do not play a role in their involvement in Shesh Besh. I did not ascertain what the religious beliefs of Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra members were. Religious differences are an important aspect of the Jewish-Arab conflict in Israel. However, in these ensembles, they do not play an important role, which can make them a safe place for musicians to meet but may not reflect some of the complexities of the Arab-Jewish conflict.

When I met with musicians and administrators from Shesh Besh or The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, I tried to ask a few standard questions, but I did not rely on a script. I asked each interviewee about him/herself, about the ensemble with which they work, about the music performed, and about communication in these ensembles. However, these questions took different forms depending on the person with whom I was speaking. For instance, when I interviewed Sami Khshiboun of Shesh Besh, we concentrated on his experience in Shesh Besh and on his opinions about Arab-Jewish communication in the ensemble. This particular interview took place with Yossi Arnheim as translator, and it quickly became something of a conversation between three friends, with Yossi doing most of the talking as he relayed information between Sami and me. We were no longer filling specific roles, with Sami as interviewee, Yossi as translator, and me as interviewer. Instead, Sami and Yossi often asked me questions, we exchanged ideas, and we shared stories. I think this was in part because Yossi was there. Sami was a little unsure of me at first, but Yossi, who he trusted, reassured him that I genuinely

wanted to hear what he had to say. As Sami told stories, Yossi would elaborate on them, and the two were soon finishing each other's sentences. Through his trust of Yossi, Sami learned to trust me as well.

In interviews, I used a digital voice recorder with the permission of each interviewee. This was an important part of the interview process. The musicians did not mind the recorder, and using it permitted me to focus on listening to what each person was saying and engage in conversation rather than taking hurried notes. What often began as a somewhat formal and shy interview usually ended with the musicians comfortably telling stories and even asking me questions. Though it can be difficult to walk into an interview without a list of questions to check off, I found that the reward for simply speaking with each musician far outweighed any inconvenience. Because of the relationships I built with some of the musicians discussed in this dissertation, I will refer to them primarily by first names.⁴⁴

In addition to conducting interviews, I relied on my own observations. I attended concerts of Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, where I took notes on the ensemble, the music, and the audience. I also digitally recorded part of each performance. Additionally, I obtained CDs of both groups, which I studied once I returned to the United States.

I augmented interviews and personal observations by visiting the ensembles' websites. I also read current literature on music and communication, music and conflict

⁴⁴ A list of musician names, instruments played, and ensemble affiliations can be found in Appendix A.

resolution, music and politics, and Israeli history. Some study focuses on how music is being used by Israeli Jews, Israeli Arabs, and Palestinians to encourage communication. Ben Brinner's article, "Beyond Israelis vs. Palestinians or Jews vs. Arabs: The Social Ramifications of Musical Interactions" profiles several groups made up of Jewish and Arab members.⁴⁵

Studies of music and communication or conflict resolution relating to other projects and areas of the world are more common than studies dealing with Israel, but are still a limited resource. A body of literature describes how music is used post-war in the former Yugoslavia to provide a common ground for survivors, refugees, and warring ethnic groups. In "Making the Refugee Experience Different: 'Azra' and the Bosnians in Norway," Svanibor Pettan describes how a choir made up of Bosnian refugees and Norwegians served to bridge the gap between refugees and natives in Norway.⁴⁶ Craig Mitchell Zelizer explores music as a conflict resolution tool in the former Yugoslavia in his dissertation, "The Role of Artistic Processes in Peacebuilding in Bosnia-Herzegovina."⁴⁷ Similarly, Dave Duggan explores conflict resolution through art in Northern Ireland in "Arts Approaches to the Conflict in Northern Ireland."⁴⁸ These

⁴⁵ Brinner. A book based on the research outlined in Brinner's article is forthcoming from Oxford.

⁴⁶ Svanibor Pettan, "Making the Refugee Experience Different: 'Azra' and the Bosnians in Norway," in *War, Exile, Everyday Life: Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Renata Jambrešić Kirin and Maja Povržanović (Zagreb Croatia: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, 1996), 245-255.

⁴⁷ Craig Mitchell Zelizer, "The Role of Artistic Processes in Peacebuilding in Bosnia-Herzegovina," Ph.D. diss., George Mason University, 2004.

⁴⁸ Dave Duggan, "Arts Approaches to the Conflict in Northern Ireland," in *Arts Approaches to Conflict*, ed. Marian Liebmann (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1975), 335-346.

studies and others like them provide important information about how music and other arts can bridge the gaps separating warring parties.

An overlapping body of literature focuses on the use of music to promote conflict. For instance, Pettan writes about how music was used in the Croatian War to encourage one side while humiliating or angering the other in “Music, Politics, and War in Croatia in the 1990s.”⁴⁹ Pettan points out that music was an important part of motivating supporters, mourning the dead, provoking the enemy on the front lines (usually by playing songs with lyrics offensive to the other side), and even as a part of torture. In her article “Music as Torture/Music as Weapon,” Suzanne Cusick discusses music’s use in interrogation at United States detention camps as part of the War on Terror.⁵⁰ Cusick and Pettan both address the fact that different people can use and interpret music in different ways. The emotional power that music wields can be used to promote peace or conflict.

A number of scholars have written about Arab-Jewish relations in Israel and the Middle East. Many authors interviewed Arabs and Jews in Israel to support their conclusions.⁵¹ Friedländer and Hussein’s *Arabs & Israelis: A Dialogue*, is a transcript of

⁴⁹ Svanibor Pettan, “Music, Politics, and War in Croatia in the 1990s. An Introduction,” in *Music, Politics, and War: Views from Croatia*, ed. Svanibor Pettan (Zagreb, Croatia: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, 1998), 9-27.

⁵⁰ Suzanne G. Cusick, “Music as Torture/Music as Weapon,” *Transcultural Music Review* 10 (2006), online journal article, accessed 27 March 2008, available at http://www.sibetrans.com/trans/trans10/cusick_eng.htm.

⁵¹ Smadar Bakovic, *Tall Shadows: Interviews with Israeli Arabs* (Lanham, Maryland: Hamilton Books, 2006); Laurence Louër, *To Be an Arab in Israel*, translated by John King (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

a meeting between an Arab and a Jew to discuss Jewish-Arab relations.⁵² Another record of Arab and Jewish opinions is Hurwitz's *Walking the Red Line: Israelis in Search of Justice for Palestine*, which is a collection of essays written by Israeli Jews and Arabs.⁵³ Bakovic's *Tall Shadows* contains a number of interviews with Israeli Arabs, focusing on Israeli Arab identity.⁵⁴ In this body of literature, one hears the voices of Arabs and Jews in addition to reading the conclusions of scholars.

What musics might be "Jewish" or "Arab" is a complex issue addressed by a number of scholars. Philip Bohlman's work, most notably "*The Land Where Two Streams Flow*" and *The World Centre for Jewish Music in Palestine*, addresses Ashkenazi Jewish ties to Western classical music.⁵⁵ In *Let Jasmine Rain Down*, Kay Kaufman Shelemay describes the importance of Arab music for Syrian Jews.⁵⁶ Her research echoes what many Israeli musicians told me: that the musical heritage of many Israeli Jews and Arabs overlaps. A.J. Racy's extensive research on Arab music goes into more detail than I am able to explore in this dissertation, but his website for the

⁵² Saul Friedländer and Mahmoud Hussein, *Arabs & Israelis: A Dialogue*, moderated by Jean LaCouture, translated by Paul Auster and Lydia Davis (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1975). Hereafter Friedländer and Hussein.

⁵³ Deena Hurwitz, ed. *Walking the Red Line: Israelis in Search of Justice for Palestine* (Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1992).

⁵⁴ Smadar Bakovic, *Tall Shadows: Interview with Israeli Arabs* (Lanham, Maryland: Hamilton Books, 2006).

⁵⁵ Philip V. Bohlman, "*The Land Where Two Streams Flow:*" *Music in the German-Jewish Community of Israel* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1989). Hereafter Bohlman 1989; Bohlman, *The World Centre for Jewish Music in Palestine 1936-1940: Jewish Musical Life on the Eve of World War II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992). Hereafter Bohlman 1992.

⁵⁶ Kay Kaufman Shelemay, *Let Jasmine Rain Down: Song and Remembrance among Syrian Jews* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998). Hereafter Shelemay.

University of California Los Angeles Near East Ensemble provides a great deal of basic information.⁵⁷

A number of the sources already mentioned address musical meaning and communication, particularly Brinner and Pettan. DeNora's "How is Extra-Musical Meaning Possible? Music as a Place and Space for 'Work'" focuses primarily on musical meaning and communication.⁵⁸ She questions one's ability to assign a universal meaning to music strictly through sound (e.g. the idea that Western minor scale will evoke a feeling of sadness). She compares music to language and concludes that any form of communication is culturally dependent. Meintjes's "Paul Simon's *Graceland*, South Africa, and the Mediation of Musical Meaning" explores the numerous ways in which musical meaning can be perceived based on political views.⁵⁹ Again, music's meaning is based on cultural ideas. Meintjes also points out that a number of different meanings can be assigned to one piece of music, depending on who listens. This relates to Pettan and Cusick, who both point to uses of music that do not always line up with the original intent of the musicians. Though they do not speak directly to my research, these works led me

⁵⁷ A.J. Racy, "Music of the Near East: the instruments," website, accessed 21 December 2007, available at [http://www.ethnomusic.ucla.edu/ensembles/world music/neareast/Instrum.htm](http://www.ethnomusic.ucla.edu/ensembles/world%20music/neareast/Instrum.htm). Hereafter Racy instruments; Racy, "Music of the Near East: metric modes (iqâ'ât) and melodic modes (maqâmât)," website, accessed 21 December 2007, available at <http://www.ethnomusic.ucla.edu/ensembles/worldmusic/neareast/Modes.htm>. Hereafter Racy modes.

⁵⁸ Tia DeNora, "How is Extra-Musical Meaning Possible? Music as a Place and Space for 'Work,'" *Sociological Theory* 4:1 (Spring 1986): 84-94, accessed 12 September 2007, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, JSTOR database. Hereafter DeNora.

⁵⁹ Louise Meintjes, "Paul Simon's *Graceland*, South Africa, and the Mediation of Musical Meaning," *Ethnomusicology* 34:1 (Winter, 1990): 37-73, accessed 7 September 2005, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, JSTOR database. Hereafter Meintjes.

to examine Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra from different angles, looking beyond their intent to possible perceptions of others.

By exploring related literature, and through interviews with members of Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, I will investigate music's role in promoting communication and trust between Israeli Arabs and Jews. In Chapter Three, I will write more about Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra as I explore their musical and visual messages, and marketing.

CHAPTER III

“IT’S A WAY TO SHOW THE MULTICULTURAL POINT”

The repertoire of Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra is a mixture of styles. Shesh Besh plays Western classical, Arab art and folk, Jewish folk, and original works that often combine these styles. A number of different people write original works for Shesh Besh, including members of the ensemble (Bishara Naddaf, Alfred Hajjar), and Jewish and Arab composers (Shay Cohen, Haya Samir). Additionally, the members of Shesh Besh arrange a number of works for their instrumentation and aesthetic ideas, including *Shibolet Ba’sade*, discussed below. The repertoire of The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra tends to be original works or arrangements of Western classical, Arab art or folk, and Jewish folk works. Conductor Wisam Gibran prepares most of the arrangements for the ensemble.

The language used to explain the repertoire of the ensembles reflects the Arab and Jewish membership. Irit Rub-Levy, Keynote director, described the decision to play a mixture of musical styles this way:

And there was a big discussion here whether the orchestra should pay attention to this [Arab music and the Shesh Besh project] because the orchestra, its natural material is Brahms, and you know, it’s Western, proper Western music. And why should we look at this Eastern music, you know? But some of us are convinced that we are a national orchestra, and we have to . . . pay attention to this as well,

and we have to bring this message that it is worthwhile music, just as important as the Western music. Even though the orchestra is not really, it's not her material, but it has to give stage and room for this music.⁶⁰

In other words, recognizing music of the West and Middle East is important for these ensembles, not just to provide interesting repertoire, but also to reach a more diverse audience. In essence, the music performed is a reflection of the larger goals of the projects: to promote communication and trust between Jews and Arabs. Acknowledging and performing the music of the other is a first step.

However, Irit's language in the above quote raises an interesting point. She calls Western classical music the "natural" and "proper" music of the IPO. Irit fully supports the combination of musics performed by Shesh Besh and emphasized that she did not hear one music as somehow better than others. However, she still uses a terminology that glorifies Western classical repertoire as "proper," echoing the opinions of some IPO members. As seen in Chapter Two, language can hinder these projects, as it becomes hard to explain their goals. Language can serve to erect boundaries—between "Western" and "Eastern," or between "proper" Western classical music and "other" musics—at the same time that these groups are trying to wear down these boundaries.

The problem with defining one music as "ours" while another music is "theirs" comes up in Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra. Mirjana Laušević, as she explained music's use in ethnic conflict in Bosnia, wrote that, "A particular sound is

⁶⁰ Rub-Levy, interview.

defined as [the music of an ethnicity], not by the fact that it is the only musical style used by the particular group, but rather by the fact that other groups do not use it as their national symbol and will not mistake it for their own.”⁶¹ In Israel, different groups claim different musics, or associate certain musics with others. Many Israeli Jews, especially those of Ashkenazi descent, tend to associate themselves with Western classical music.⁶² There is a great deal of pride, especially among well-to-do Jews in Israel and parts of Europe and America, in the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (IPO) and its Western classical repertoire (thus the American Friends of the IPO). On the other hand, Ben Brinner points out that Middle Eastern music has been “ignored or denigrated by much of the Israeli public and most cultural institutions until very recently.”⁶³

Music has traditionally been used in Israel to separate that which is considered to be Western, European, and Jewish, from that which is considered to be Middle Eastern and Arab. Thus, when members of the IPO suggested playing Middle Eastern music, they crossed a cultural line. Laušević’s explanation of how a musical style is defined as belonging to one group and not another sheds light on the complexities of the situation for members of Shesh Besh and the youth orchestra. While Western classical music might be considered the music of the European Jews in Israel, and Middle Eastern music might be the “ethnic” music of the Arabs, both sides actually share musics. For instance, many Arab musicians study/studied Western classical music in Israeli schools and

⁶¹ Mirjana Laušević, “Some Aspects of Music and Politics in Bosnia,” in *Neighbors at War: Anthropological Perspectives on Yugoslav Ethnicity, Culture and History*, ed. Joel M Halpern and David A. Kideckel (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 293-94.

⁶² Bohlman 1989; Bohlman 1992.

⁶³ Brinner, subsection: “Social Networks,” 2.

conservatories and play this style with proficiency equal to that of Jewish musicians. Similarly, many Jewish musicians are of Middle Eastern descent, and grew up hearing and learning Middle Eastern music, so they are familiar with many Arab pieces and know how to improvise and play in this style as well as their Arab colleagues.

Above, I mentioned that many consider Western classical music to be the music of European Jews in Israel. However, this leaves out a large number of Jews, who are of Middle Eastern, Russian, or Sephardic descent. This variety within the Jewish Israeli population leads to variety in Jewish music. Jews historically wrote and performed folk and art musics of Israel, Morocco, Iraq, Russia, and a number of other areas, and continue to do so today. Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra include some of these Jewish musics in their repertoire. For instance, both play arrangements of *Shibolet Ba'sade*, an Israeli Jewish folksong. The repertoire of the two ensembles combines more than just two styles of music—Western classical and Arab. The ensembles actually explore numerous styles of art and folk music from Jewish and Arab traditions that can be associated with the West, the Middle East, or other areas of the world.

By finding shared musics and by learning each other's music, the Arab and Jewish musicians in these ensembles wear down musical boundaries and point to similarities between the two peoples. Peter Marck tells a powerful story of a moment when music crossed these boundaries at a Shesh Besh performance:

. . . a lot of the music we play, the Eastern music, it's the music of the Eastern Jews. It's not only Arabs. We played at the School of the Arts, and the principal

of the school, a woman, came into our concert, and she just . . . First of all, she's Iraqi, and she welcomed the Arab musicians in Arabic, which had never happened before. And they were very surprised. And then we were playing, and at one point she was just sitting there crying. And she explained to the kids afterwards that this is the music that she had heard when she was a child in her home. It wasn't foreign to her. We tend to think that, oh, it's Arabs and Jews and they play their music and we play our music, but in the East, in Iraq and Egypt, some of the greatest musicians were Jews. And some of the music was written by Jews, and the Jews loved to hear it.⁶⁴

Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra use music to introduce their members and audiences to new and unfamiliar sounds. In this way, they hope to encourage an appreciation of the other side in the Arab-Jewish conflict and to open up lines of communication through musical exploration. At the same time, they also use music to provide a common ground for musicians and audiences. By sharing music, it is possible to see other similarities. In the following sections of this chapter, I will discuss specific examples of repertoire and performances by Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra to illustrate how these groups use music to try to provide a common ground for Israeli Arabs and Jews.

The Music of Shesh Besh

Many of Shesh Besh's performances take place at schools throughout Israel. However, the performance I attended on 15 July 2007 was different. It was part of an Israel Philharmonic concert in Tel Aviv (featuring works by Mozart, Schoenberg, and

⁶⁴ Hereafter Marck, interview.

Beethoven) and was an awards ceremony for the members of Shesh Besh, who won the KulturPreis Europa's Tolerance Award for 2007. With so much going on, the group only played two pieces, both from their CD, *Collective Memory*, released the day of the concert.

The members of Shesh Besh were dressed nicely for the performance, according to Western classical music standards. Those in the orchestra wore concert black—tuxedos or formal black dress. Most of the others wore black slacks, white dress shirts, and ties. However, Ramsis Kasis, Arab *'udist* in Shesh Besh, wore a black shirt, unlike all the other men in the ensemble. Yossi joked that Ramsis is “the black sheep” of the group, and all the musicians, especially Ramsis, laughed at the pun.⁶⁵

Shesh Besh contains a mixture of instruments, representing the combination of Arab and Jewish, Middle Eastern and Western. At performances, the musicians sit according to instrument, which has the sonic advantage of keeping similar instruments and parts close to one another so the musicians can listen to each other, bring out important parts, etc. The seating has the additional advantage of always seating a Jew next to an Arab and vice versa. Arab violinist Sami Khshiboun sat next to Jewish violinist/violist Saida Bar-Lev. Western flutist Yossi Arnheim sat next to Arab Alfred Hajjar, who plays *ney* in the group. *'Udist* Ramsis Kasis sat next to Jewish double bassist Peter Marck. The Arab percussionist sat next to Peter. Percussion in the ensemble tends

⁶⁵ Arnheim, interview.

to be the *deff/daff* or *darbuka*, played by Bishara Naddaf, but at the concert, Naddaf's nephew filled in on the *riq*.

There were music stands set up, but the musicians tended to play from memory for most of the performance, improvising and adding ornamentation. Because they played primarily from memory, the musicians spent much of the performance watching each other and smiling at especially good solos.

Shesh Besh performed two pieces on the concert—*Shibolet Ba'sade* and *Khatwet Habibi*. *Shibolet Ba'sade* is originally a Jewish Israeli folk song written by Matityahu Shelem.⁶⁶ The song's title translates to "Wheat in the Field," and the lyrics depict "rural life and Kibbutz life."⁶⁷ The group's arrangement of *Shibolet Ba'sade* does not incorporate voice, though they often perform with Israeli singer Haya Samir for other pieces.

Shibolet Ba'sade is published in Velvel Pasternak's anthology of Israeli folksongs.⁶⁸ The printed manuscript of the tune points to a difference between the "Jewish" and "Arab" musics played by Shesh Besh. Pieces of Arab origin, like *Khatwet Habibi*, are often far more difficult to find written in Western musical notation. This is due in part to the many differences in tuning, improvisation, and ornamentation between Arab musics and some Jewish musics and in part to the oral tradition historically associated with most Arab musics. However, *Shibolet Ba'sade* is published in Western

⁶⁶ Marck, liner notes.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Velvel Pasternak, compiler and arranger, *The Best of Israeli Folksongs: An Anthology* (Tara Publications, 2002) 161.

notation in an anthology of similar songs (see Figure 3). *Shibolet Ba'sade* does not sound like Western classical music, such as the Mozart or Beethoven performed by the IPO on the concert. The combination of the D aeolian mode and syncopation gives the music a Middle Eastern character.

Yossi explained the group's approach to *Shibolet Ba'sade* in this way:

We took one . . . Israeli Jewish folksong, it sounds really Middle Eastern, so we put it in for the schoolchildren in two versions. The first version is like an opening for the piece, [and] sounds like [Western] classical music. And then it evolves into becoming a Middle Eastern piece, and suddenly the drums come in and it becomes a dance or something.⁶⁹

Shibolet Ba'sade brings together musical elements of the West and the Middle East.⁷⁰ Yossi calls the first section the Western classical section. It begins with a simple melody in the viola over a bass line, outlining a standard D aeolian chord progression (i-iv-♭VII-i). This passage sounds melodically and harmonically Western because of the D aeolian mode. After the first phrase, the flute enters with the *Shibolet Ba'sade* melody, with the violin providing harmony. All the parts move fairly independently, playing melody, countermelody, and harmony, in a predominantly polyphonic texture.

⁶⁹ Arnheim, interview.

⁷⁰ Live and recorded performances of Shesh Besh's *Shibolet Ba'sade* and *Khatwet Habibi* are identical in form, melodic modes, and rhythmic modes. Differences occurred in the use of ornamentation by performers and in the *taqsim* sections.

Shibolet Basade

Moderately

M. Shelem

Shi - bo - let ba - sa - de ko - r' - a ba - ru - ach mé - o - mes gar - i - nim ki
u - v' - mer - chav ha - rim yom k' - var ya - fu - ach ha - she - mesh ke - tem v' - za -
rav hav u - ru hoy u - ru shu - ru b'né kfa - rim ka -
ma hén bash - la k'var al pné ha - ka - rim ki - tz' - ru shil - chu ma - gal
et ré - sheet ha - ka - tzir

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Shi-bo-let ba-sa-de
Ko-r'-a ba-ru-ach
Mé-o-mes gar-i-nim ki rav
Uv-mer-chav ha-rim
Yom k'-var ya-fu-ach
Ha-she-mesh ke-tem v'-za-hav

U-ru hoy u-ru
Shu-ru v'-né kfa-rim
Ka-ma hén bash-la k'-var
Al p'-né ha-ka-rim
Kits-ru shil-chu ma-gal
Et ré-sheet ha-ka-tzir

שבֹּלֶת בַּשָּׂדֶה
כּוֹרֵצָה בְּרוּחַ
מַעֲמָס גְּרַעֲיִימִים כִּי רַב.
וּבִמְרֻחַב הָרִים
יוֹם קָבֵר יְפוּחַ,
הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בָּתֵּם וְהַב.
עוֹרוּ, הוּי, עוֹרוּ,
שׁוּרוּ בְּנֵי כְּפָרִים.
קָמָה הֵן בַּשָּׂלָה קָבֵר
עַל פְּנֵי הַקָּרִים.
קָצְרוּ, שְׁלַחוּ מַגָּל,
עַתָּה רֹאשִׁית הַקָּצִיר.

**ARISE! SING OUT AND JOIN THE DANCE CIRCLE.
HONOR THE BEGINNING OF HARVEST.**

Figure 3: *Shibolet Basade* transcription⁷¹

⁷¹ Ibid., 116.

The Western section is only about 50 seconds long and is followed by an improvised section. The improvised section is an Arab/Middle Eastern *taqsim*, in which first the *ney*, and then the Western transverse flute, improvise freely. The *ney* especially tends to bend notes so that they are slightly flat or sharp from their positions in a Western aeolian mode. This bending slightly sharp or flat is a common feature of Middle Eastern *maqamat*, or melodic modes. The *maqam* of this section is *maqam basaliek*, which contains the same melodic notes as the D aeolian mode (D-E-F-G-A-B \flat -C-D).⁷²

Maqamat and Western modes have some similarities. In addition to sometimes sharing pitches, as with D aeolian mode and *maqam basaliek*, they also both give cues to the performer or composer about melodic motion.⁷³ Western modes tend to give harmonic cues, but *maqamat* do not. Additionally, *maqamat* provide expressive direction (much like Indian ragas) and indications for improvisation and ornamentation. Another difference between Western modes and Middle Eastern *maqamat* is the number of notes in the octave. While octaves in Western music are divided into 12 pitches, Arab music partitions the octave into as many as 24 pitches, which leads to a larger number of *maqamat* than Western modes.

The third section of *Shibolet Ba'sade* is a lively dance. It is in a heterophonic texture, with almost all of the instruments playing slightly different, ornamented versions

⁷² Classical Arabic Music, "Maqamat Scales," website, accessed 21 December 2007, available at <http://www.classicalarabicmusic.com/scales.htm>. Hereafter "Maqamat Scales" website.

⁷³ Ruth Davis, "V. Middle East and Asia: 2. Middle East and Central Asia: 'maqām', 'makom,'" *Grove Music Online*, ed. L. Macy, accessed 23 February 2008, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, Grove Music database.

of the melody. A *taqsim* section for solo violin occurs partway through the third section. The violin plays a rhythmically free solo, ornamenting *maqam basaliek*, while the drum keeps a steady beat in the background, and the bass plays a simple progression of A (sol)-D (do)-A-D, etc. The *iqa'at*, or Arab rhythmic mode, during the third section is *iqa'at maqsum*, and is maintained throughout by the drum.⁷⁴ The pattern of *iqa'at maqsum*, follows a basic organization of dum (D: a low drum tone), tak (T: a higher drum tone), and silence (-) lined up over the four beats of each measure of *Shibolet Ba'sade* (see Figure 4).

D	T	-	T	D	-	T	-		D	T	-	T	D	-	T	-
1	2		3	4					1	2		3	4			

Figure 4: *Iqa'at Maqsum*

Thus, Arab/Middle Eastern musical elements—heterophonic texture, a *taqsim*, and *iqa'at maqsum*—are combined with a Jewish melody. Additionally, the overlap of D aeolian mode and *maqam basaliek* is still present in this section. The combination of these Jewish and Arab elements is intentional and is seen by members of the group as a way to present their message of Jewish and Arab coexistence musically. As Yossi puts it, “It’s a way to show the multicultural point, and some of it is to do something for our artistic souls.”⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Racy, modes.

⁷⁵ Arnheim, interview.

One cannot overestimate the importance of doing “something for [the] artistic souls” of the musicians in Shesh Besh. The musicians I spoke with all pointed to the opportunity to play new music as a driving force behind joining the group. Thus, a piece like *Shibolet Ba’sade*, which they put together in a West-meets-East sort of arrangement, is musically stimulating, in addition to presenting an image of musical coexistence. Performing a piece like *Khatwet Habibi*, composed by Egyptian musician Mohammed Abdul Wahab, also feeds the souls of the musicians. The piece challenges the musicians to put together their own unique interpretation of the work based on the instruments played and the performers’ musical preferences.

Mohammed Abdul Wahab was an Egyptian singer and composer of the twentieth century. While rooted in Arab musical tradition, his works also drew from other musical styles, such as those of Spain and North America, and pushed the limits of modern Arab music.⁷⁶ Abdul Wahab’s later works were for large ensembles, which often incorporated non-Arab instruments, like Hawaiian slide guitar. Further, he used Western-style notation for these and many of his other works. Abdul Wahab is a favorite of Arabs and Jews alike throughout the Middle East and beyond. Virginia Danielson writes, “His songs are a cherished part of people’s memories of home and childhood.”⁷⁷

Khatwet Habibi is melodically arranged around two related *maqamat*—*maqam hijaz* and *maqam shadd araban*. Like *Shibolet Ba’sade*, it uses *iq’a’at maqsum*, though

⁷⁶ Virginia Danielson, “Stardom in Egyptian Music: Four Case Studies,” *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, Volume 6: The Middle East*, ed. Virginia Danielson, Scott Marcus, and Dwight Reynolds (Routledge, 2001): 600, accessed 23 February 2008, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Online database.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

there is often rhythmic confusion between the melodic instruments and the drum. The strong beat of the melody does not line up with the strong beat in the drum until later in the arrangement. The texture is heterophonic throughout.

Listening to Shesh Besh rehearse and perform, I never heard them play either of these pieces the exact same way twice. There were always new ornaments or changes in the texture that brought a new instrument to the fore. They accomplished these expressive changes while executing sudden tempo changes or playing complex technical passages. In order to achieve this level of musical polish, it was essential that the musicians communicate with each other. They stopped often in the rehearsal to discuss what they wanted to accomplish in a certain section. They watched each other while performing, signaling their intentions through body language and musical cues, such as specific beat patterns in the percussion that signal the end or beginning of a section. During the live performance, the group's attention expanded to include the audience, as they spoke to the audience members and smiled at us while speaking or playing. In rehearsal and performance, the Jewish and Arab musicians worked as equals. They knew these works so well that there was no difference between technical, musical, or improvisatory proficiency among the musicians.

I was not surprised that the members of Shesh Besh chose to play a Jewish and an Arab piece at the concert. For one thing, these pieces were quite different from the Mozart and Beethoven played by the orchestra that night, so it set the ensemble apart musically for the audience. However, when I listened to *Collective Memory*, I realized

that there were no Western classical pieces here either. The repertoire on the CD consists of Arab art and folk music, Jewish art and folk music, and original works or arrangements that combine elements of Arab and Jewish, Western and Middle Eastern styles. When I asked Yossi about the repertoire, he told me that,

The pieces were chosen over a period of a few years of our work. Some are original compositions . . . Some of the Middle Eastern classics were chosen as they present less difficulty to be played on Western instruments. The tune of the Israeli song *Shibolet Ba'sade* makes a good opportunity to be played both ways: European and Arabic.⁷⁸

Yossi's explanation tells us why some Middle Eastern works are included on the CD. His explanation of *Shibolet Ba'sade* is similar to his earlier descriptions of the piece, with a Western/European beginning, and a Middle Eastern/Arab ending. In the quote above, we see another instance in which terminology can serve as a limitation or a source of confusion. Is the second section of *Shibolet Ba'sade* "Arab" or "Middle Eastern?" Is there a difference in these labels that we can hear in the music? Or are the labels used, as I suggested earlier, because they are the available language to describe this project? The musical labels and styles on *Collective Memory* are a complex mixture. "Western" or "Middle Eastern" music on the album may be Arab, Jewish, or Israeli.

Though I did not get to hear the ensemble play Western classical music, they assured me that all the musicians, including those playing Arab instruments, play the

⁷⁸ Yossi Arnheim, principal flutist with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble, e-mail correspondence with author, 24 August 2007. Hereafter Arnheim, correspondence.

Western arrangements. This inevitably changes the original sound of the Western pieces, but playing Western instruments in Middle Eastern works is quite similar. The idea is to include all the musicians in the performance of a variety of musics.

Though Shesh Besh plays Western classical music for school children, they chose to only include original works or Middle Eastern folk or art music on the album. I believe this is for two reasons. First, the musicians chose works that they all enjoyed playing and/or that were written for them. Second, by putting together an album of Middle Eastern music, they are able to market themselves in a “world music” category, while still being associated with the IPO and its Western classical audience. I will discuss marketing further below as I look into the visual images these groups project.

Collective Memory’s title was drawn from one of the original works on the album. Shesh Besh commissioned Shay Cohen, a Jewish Israeli composer, to write a piece for them in 2004.⁷⁹ He began listening to recordings of Arab music to gain an understanding of musical styles and instruments. While listening, he heard a tune he had heard many times in childhood. He realized as he listened to the song again that he shared this music with many Arabs and Jews. He took the melody from that song and used it as the basis for *Collective Memory*. The piece, while incorporating Middle Eastern elements, sounds much like Western classical music. The other original works on the CD may lean toward Middle Eastern or Western classical styles or may combine these styles in different ways and to different degrees. *Collective Memory*’s title reflects the fact that many Jews and

⁷⁹ Marck, liner notes.

Arabs share a collective memory of musics and the land in which they live. Shesh Besh took the title from this piece for its album because they believed it summed up their project. As Irit said, the piece and the album, *Collective Memory*, are meant to communicate “that there is something common” between Arabs and Jews.⁸⁰

The Music of The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra

The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra performs in diverse venues throughout Israel. I attended a performance on 8 July 2007 at the Israel Music Conservatory in Tel Aviv. Two days later, the group played a similar concert in Nazareth, a predominantly Arab town. The youth orchestra concert in Tel Aviv was part of a larger series of performances, lectures, and master classes taking place at the conservatory that afternoon.

The musicians were all dressed in black and came out on stage very casually, talking and laughing. The ensemble was larger than Shesh Besh, with a violin section of five people, a cello, two double bassists, an ‘*ud*, one clarinet, one flute, two recorders, a piano, and a *darbuka*. The Jewish and Arab performers were mixed together based on the instrumentation, not on their ethnicity. Conductor Wisam Gibran, a former member of Shesh Besh, only came on stage after the musicians had settled. He, the pianist, and the drummer played without sheet music, while the other musicians used sheet music to varying degrees—some read from music stands the entire concert, while others seemed to refer to the page only occasionally. Likewise, the musicians added ornamentation to

⁸⁰ Rub-Levy, interview.

varying degrees during the Middle Eastern pieces and at prescribed points in more “Western” compositions, as will be seen below. For example, one of the recorder players added heavy ornamentation, while the clarinetist and flutist added almost none.

While the members of Shesh Besh tend to play from memory and improvise freely, the members of the youth orchestra tend to rely more on written arrangements. This is no doubt based in large part on the age and experience of the performers. However, many Arab musicians traditionally learn music via an oral, rather than a written tradition. For these musicians, playing by memory and improvising is likely more comfortable than reading music. Is the use of written music a concession to the Western art music tradition? This is possible. Meir and Wisam are both accomplished Western classical musicians, so they may simply lean toward written music due to their musical training. Additionally, combining Western and Middle Eastern instruments can be quite challenging. Writing for Western instruments, like the piano, and Middle Eastern instruments, such as the *‘ud*, means mixing differing tuning systems. As mentioned above, the octave is usually divided into 12 pitches in Western classical music, while Arab music usually uses 24 pitches to the octave. Combining two tuning systems can be difficult, especially for young performers, so Wisam writes many arrangements specifically for the group, and they also commission works.⁸¹ Playing new arrangements and compositions is very important for the orchestra, as Meir points out:

⁸¹ Wiesel, interview.

Well, we are proud that our ensemble is actually producing new music. And actually . . . if you want to look at it this way, this is music that is created here in Israel, in this reality of a mixture of Arabs and Jews in the Middle East, and it's music that wouldn't be created had that reality not been as it is. So it is a sort of a new art, new music, that grows out of reality.⁸²

For The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, as with Shesh Besh, the musical message of mixing Western and Middle Eastern styles goes hand in hand with the mixture of Arab and Jewish musicians. The repertoire of the two groups has some overlaps. For example, each plays its own arrangement of *Shibolet Basade*⁸³ and Arab pieces. On the other hand, the youth orchestra is unique in their combination of Western classical repertoire with Middle Eastern stylistic ideas, as in their arrangement of Chopin's Piano Prelude, Op. 28.

The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra's interpretation of *Shibolet Basade* bears many similarities to Shesh Besh's. It also begins with a Western-sounding section, but this section is short-lived, as the orchestra members enter to play the melody in an ornamented heterophonic texture. The Western and Middle Eastern mixture in this version of the tune alternates more often than Shesh Besh's interpretation, following a West-East-West-East pattern. The youth orchestra version of *Shibolet Basade* is organized around the same melodic and rhythmic modes as the Shesh Besh version. There are no prolonged *taqsim* sections, but many of the musicians ornament the melody throughout the piece.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ The spelling of *Shibolet Basade* is different on The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra album from that of Shesh Besh. I will use this spelling while discussing the youth orchestra arrangement of the piece.

The youth orchestra's arrangement of Chopin's Prelude, Op. 28, is in ABA' form. The first section presents Chopin's melodies in the original key, E minor. The piano introduces the melody, but other instruments soon join in. The second section of the piece is a group improvisation, based on the E aeolian mode. The recorder and *ney* lead the improvisation, but soon the entire orchestra joins in. The improvisations are rhythmically free and build to a climax that leads into the third section of the piece. The third section is a return to the Prelude melody, played by the entire orchestra, and then fades as instruments drop away.

As with Shesh Besh, no two performances of the youth orchestra's music are the same. Though they play from written music, arranged specifically for the group, the ornamentation added by many of the players and the content of improvised solos changes with each performance. The young people in the group are obviously comfortable with each other, as they spent several minutes before the concert began wandering around the stage talking and laughing with one another. During the concert, Wisam often said a few words before a piece, drawing the audience into the experience.

The music performed by the youth orchestra at the concert I attended and on their CD is a balance of Jewish and Arab, Western and Eastern. Meir and Wisam choose the pieces to reflect the Arab and Jewish mixture of the orchestra's membership and to perform as much new music as possible.

The Importance of Musical Styles

In Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, playing Western, Middle Eastern, and new music is very important. In her article, “Getting Our Acts Together: Conflict Resolution Through Music,” June Boyce-Tillman writes:

If we sing or play the music of others, we enter into their experience. They become musical guides; by bringing their music alive through performing it, we get closer to them than just by listening. We share someone else’s route to integration and conflict resolution.⁸⁴

By experiencing music together, the musicians are experiencing each other’s worlds. One musician can teach another something new, opening up a line of communication between the two. Peter tells of his early encounters with Middle Eastern music thus:

And [the Arab musicians] came in, and all the concepts were new to me. The rhythm and the harmony, and it was completely new to me. You know, they were willing to explain, and during the first few years, I used to go to Nazareth and learn pieces of music and go to Nazareth and play them with the violinist. Since then we’ve changed violinists, but . . . with the new violinist also we went up there. And we spent a whole morning working things out, to kind of see where they put the emphasis in the music, you know. But that was fun. I always enjoyed that, going. It was a very intimate kind of experience because it’s not things that you can write down, you just had to play together because a lot of the things were improvised, a lot of things were ornamentation, that it’s not written. And a lot of the things that they do with the bow are not in the Western technique, doesn’t have any parallel with it. They have techniques with the bow that we don’t have at

⁸⁴ June Boyce-Tillman, “Getting Our Acts Together: Conflict Resolution Through Music,” in *Arts Approaches to Conflict*, ed. Marian Liebmann (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1996), 228. Hereafter, Boyce-Tillman.

all. We don't, and so it was a matter of seeing it and hearing it and going over it again and over it again until I could kind of get the feel. It was a matter of feel.⁸⁵

Peter developed an appreciation for the unique complexity of Middle Eastern music, learning how to improvise, add ornaments, and incorporate new bow strokes. This required an appreciation of the music he was learning, but also of his teachers. He had to spend a lot of time with the Arab members of the ensemble, watching and listening to them play and then copying their technique. Learning “their” music, and making it his own, helped him to better appreciate the music and the musicians.

Learning new music is an opportunity for communication between the musicians. If the music is not written, as in much Arab music that comes from a long oral tradition, the musicians must spend time speaking with each other and playing with and for each other to learn new pieces. Even notated music demands that the musicians go through these same processes, as musical notation only communicates pitches and basic expressive cues but not a finished musical product. To put together meaningful musical performances, the musicians of Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra must communicate verbally and musically.

In the youth orchestra, Meir explains, improvisation is a new, and often intimidating, technique for the Jewish musicians trained only in Western classical music. Performing improvised sections in a large group, like that in the Chopin Prelude discussed above, not only opens them to new music, but also provides them with a safe

⁸⁵ Marck, interview.

place to experiment. They can get ideas from the other musicians, but they are not asked to try out those ideas on their own. There is comfort in numbers. Meir explains that when “the whole orchestra improvises, you know, a big noise . . . that makes it easier for them to mingle, and to sort of enjoy that. If you tell somebody, ‘Now you improvise,’ and he’s alone, that frightens him. If it’s the whole gang, okay, then they join.”⁸⁶

The balance of familiar and new music in the ensembles keeps the musicians interested and encourages them to communicate with and rely upon one another. Visual images support a musical picture of unity in diversity in both groups. I have discussed their appearances on stage, in which they dress similarly, sit with Arabs and Jews mixed, and communicate verbally and musically with each other and the audience during the performances. They also provide programs and/or flyers at concerts to draw their audience in, as will be discussed in the next section of this chapter. However, many people do not see these ensembles perform. Both groups have CDs, which can introduce their music to a larger public, and these CDs convey strong visual messages to back up the musical ideas.

Visual Messages and Marketing

Since the Shesh Besh concert I attended was part of an IPO concert, I bought a glossy program that advertised the orchestra first and foremost. The program was half in

⁸⁶ Wiesel, interview.

English and half in Hebrew. The English cover of the program mirrored a Hebrew cover on the opposite side of the booklet (see Figure 5a).

In addition to providing information about the works to be performed, the program includes information on Zubin Mehta and the piano soloist for the evening, a list of orchestra personnel, and a number of advertisements. It looks like any other program I have seen at a Western orchestra concert. The “IPO News” page of the program describes Shesh Besh and the Tolerance Award it received (see Figure 5b). Shesh Besh is described as a group of musicians who believe “that the language of music may bind the hearts and build a real bridge between nations.”⁸⁷ These few paragraphs are more than an acknowledgment; they are an advertisement for Shesh Besh, and by extension the IPO. The program is a well-worded advertisement for the IPO, in addition to the companies paying for full-page ads within, such as banks, an art auction house, and luxury apartment complexes. This advertising assumes a well-off audience, interested in art and Western classical music. If we look at Shesh Besh’s CD, we see further signs of visual marketing of Shesh Besh’s mission and of its musical product (see Figure 6).

⁸⁷ Ibid.



Figure 5a: Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and Shesh Besh Program⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, The, "Subscription Concert no. 11, Program," 15 July 2007.

IPO News

KulturPreis Europa's Tolerance Award to SheshBesh

The European Tolerance Award for 2007 was granted to the SheshBesh Ensemble and *KeyNote*, the Programme for Music Education and Community Outreach of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

The KulturPreis Europa (European Award for Cultural Achievement) has been awarded for 15 years by the KulturForum Europa to individuals and institutions who have contributed to the development of human rights, law, democracy and intercultural dialogue. Founded in 1992 by the former German Foreign Secretary, Mr. Hans Dietrich Genscher, the KulturForum Europa is composed of Europe's leading politicians, scientists, artists and opinion leaders. The KulturPreis Europa includes a special Tolerance Award.

SheshBesh, the Arab-Jewish Ensemble was founded in 2000 as part of *KeyNote*. The ensemble, comprising three IPO musicians and four top rank Arab musicians, performs a select repertoire of Western and Oriental music. Their stage presence and their music reflect their belief that the language of music may bind the hearts and build a real bridge between nations. In collaboration with *KeyNote*, SheshBesh has played for thousands of students and premiered Israeli compositions commissioned especially for the ensemble at the Mann Auditorium in Tel Aviv, at the Israeli Music Festival and at the Biennial for Contemporary Music at the Tel Aviv Museum. In 2005 the ensemble appeared in the USA and Germany, as well as at the Oud Festival in Jerusalem, where it was awarded a prize. SheshBesh regularly appears in Jewish and Arab schools throughout Israel and in communities in the Jezre'el Valley and Nazareth, in collaboration with the Jezre'el Valley House of Arts. The ensemble's first CD has just been released.

The Chamber Music Series, Tel Aviv Museum of Art

The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra's Chamber Music Series, at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, offers 10 concerts of exciting programmes performed by international and Israeli artists. The Series comprises 10 concerts, 5 on Saturdays, at 5:30 PM, and 5 on Fridays, at 2:00 PM.

On Friday, 20 July 2007, the Series will host soprano Chen Reiss, flutist and recorder player Michael Melzer, harpsichord player Boris Kleiner and IPO members, violinists Saida Bar-Lev and Elyakum Salzman, violist Amir Van Der Hal, cellist Michael Haran, double bass player Teddy Kling and oboist and oboe d'amore player Tamar Narkiss-Melzer. The musical programme will feature Telemann's Suite in A minor for recorder and strings and J. S. Bach's Cantata no. 202, Cantata no. 209, aria from Cantata no. 84 and aria from St. Matthew Passion.

For tickets, information and requests please contact the IPO Subscription Department, Tel.: 1-700-70-30-30.

The IPO on the Internet

Please visit the IPO website: www.ipco.co.il
and the *KeyNote* (the IPO's educational programme) website: www.ipco-kids.org

The Buchmann-Mehta School of Music

The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and Tel-Aviv University have established the University School of Music named after Josef Buchmann and Zubin Mehta. For the first time, these two leading institutions collaborate in training future generations of musicians in Israel and helping promote their careers in Israel and abroad. The School, based on the existing Academy of Music at Tel-Aviv University, includes an Excellence Programme for ca. 100 outstanding full-scholarship students. Principal IPO musicians are on the School's faculty and Zubin Mehta is its Honorary President. The establishment of the School was enabled thanks to a generous donation made by Mr. Josef Buchmann, a staunch friend of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and vice chairman of the Tel-Aviv University Board of Governors.

Figure 5b: "IPO News" from Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and Shesh Besh Program⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Ibid.

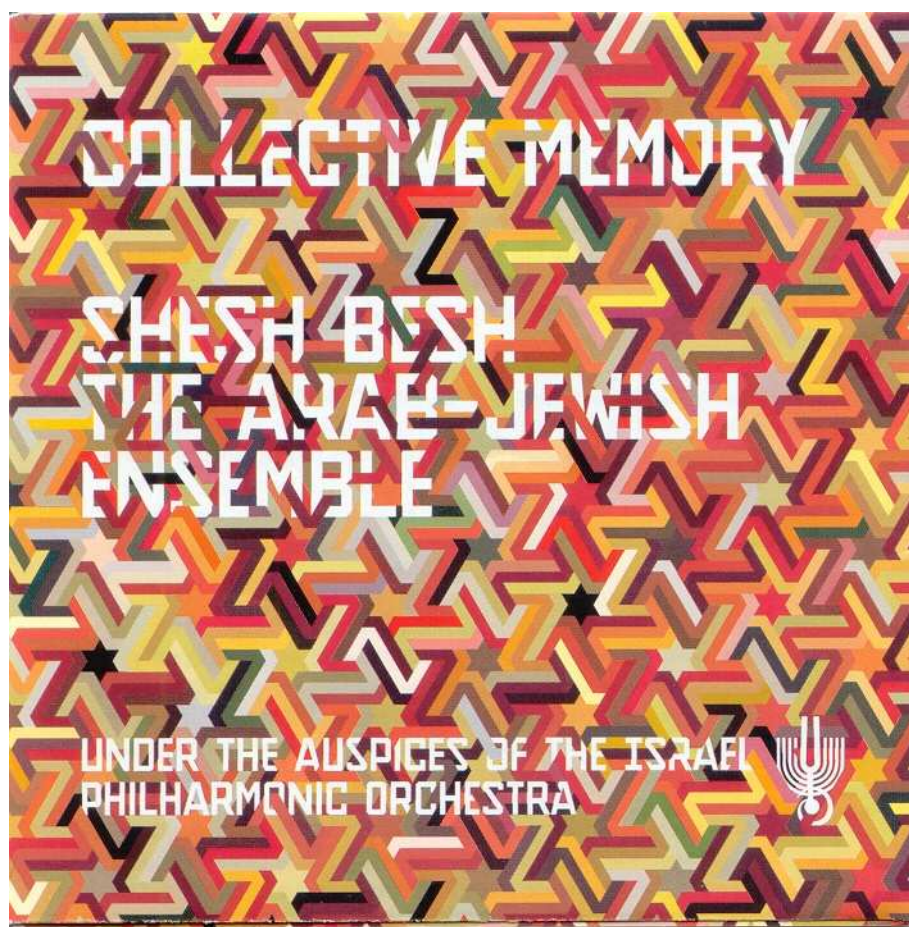


Figure 6: Shesh Besh Album Cover⁹⁰

Collective Memory's cover is intended to catch the eye. The bright colors and intricate designs, woven around the text, combine to create a strong visual impression. The cover was designed to visually reflect the mixture of Arab and Jewish, Eastern and Western in Shesh Besh:

⁹⁰ Shesh Besh, The Arab-Jewish Ensemble, under the auspices of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, *Collective Memory*, KeyNote-IPO, ACUM, 2007, compact disc.

[The designers] . . . found inspiration in a wall pattern from [the] Alhambra; [sic] the Muslim temple in Granada, Spain [see Figure 7]. What we found so interesting in this pattern is that at the same time it is “typically” Muslim, it also contains Stars of David in it. For us this pattern does a similar work to Shesh Besh’s music, it brings together East and West, Muslims and Jews . . . those who are somewhat familiar with Muslim/Middle Eastern crafts might recognize [the cover art pattern] as a visual element prevailing in the region. Examples would be the ceramic work on El-Aktza, the inlaid Turkish Shesh-Besh boxes, and floor tiles in Mosques to name a few. We like the way the typography is weaved into the pattern. It is like the English, Western type is part of this pattern that is made of Jews and Arabs.⁹¹

The combination of Muslim and Jewish art and symbols reflects the combination of Arab and Jewish musics in *Collective Memory*. The image Shesh Besh puts forward in its album cover is simultaneously geared toward a world music audience drawn to an Arab-Jewish musical combination and to the IPO’s classical audience, as it announces its affiliation with the orchestra on the cover. The album, just like the IPO’s concerts (as seen in the program example), is slickly marketed to draw as wide an audience as possible. In the album’s liner notes, the ensemble is advertised as follows:

Shesh Besh: two cultures living together in music; three members of the Israel Philharmonic alongside four of the finest musicians from Israel’s Arab community; searching for an elusive balance of East and West in music Shesh Besh is a model of tolerance and mutual respect in a turbulent, violent Middle East.⁹²

⁹¹ Irit Rub-Levy, e-mail correspondence with author, 27 August 2007.

⁹² Marck, liner notes.

The above analysis of Shesh Besh's marketing practices may sound cynical, but marketing is crucial for the group and its message. Peter pointed out that Shesh Besh "is important to the IPO as an image tool, a fund raising tool."⁹³ In order to maintain its funding, Shesh Besh must benefit the IPO in some way. To reach as wide an audience as possible, and present its message of musical coexistence and communication between Israeli Arabs and Jews, it must market its musical product.



Figure 7: Star of David in Muslim Mural, the Alhambra, Grenada, Spain⁹⁴

⁹³ Marck, correspondence, 25 June 2007.

⁹⁴ Raymond F. Tennant, "Mathematics, Art, and Computers: Visualizing Mathematics: Imagery Techniques for Learning Abstract Concepts," website, http://www.mupad.com/mathpad/2004_1/visual_maths/.

Shesh Besh's ties to the IPO can be seen in two lights. On the one hand, Shesh Besh benefits from a musical and financial association with a well-known Western orchestra. On the other hand, Shesh Besh exists under the auspices of a Jewish organization. Some could see this as a conflict of interests. How can a Western, Jewish orchestra sponsor an Arab-Jewish ensemble? Is there a conflict of interest for Shesh Besh as it tries to satisfy the IPO and work for Arab-Jewish coexistence? The members with whom I spoke did not see a conflict of interest, but this does not mean that others will share their views.

One can also read Shesh Besh's relationship with the IPO as a form of Orientalism. Palestinian scholar Edward Said coined the term "Orientalism" to denote the racism inherent in the separation—physical and perceived—of Westerners from "Orientals." Oriental served as a blanket label for many different peoples in the Middle East and Asia during the nineteenth century. Arabs were classified as Orientals, which highlighted their exoticism to Westerners, and also neutralized their individuality by lumping them together with many other diverse groups. Orientalism limited, and still limits, Arabs (and others of the Middle East and Asia) and Westerners by placing them in defined roles that are not allowed to overlap. For instance, Arab music and musicians might be seen as less sophisticated than Western classical music and musicians. This limits the Arab musicians because they do not receive respect for musical expertise, whether they perform Arab or Western classical music. At the same time, a Jewish musician trained in Western classical music can be limited by Orientalism because s/he

will not (or should not) explore Arab music or work with Arab musicians. In the end, the racism of Orientalism hurts many different groups—Arabs and Jews, Christians and Muslims, Easterners and Westerners, Israelis and Palestinians, blacks and whites, etc.—because it divides them along arbitrary lines that restrict creativity, open-mindedness, and communication.

Said founded The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, a Jewish-Arab Western classical orchestra, with Daniel Barenboim in the 1990s in an effort to bring Arab and Jewish young people together to play music. The orchestra does not play Middle Eastern musics. Rather, through Western classical music, the musicians try to build relationships based on a shared interest, which may not be a shared heritage. They try to wear down divisions and stereotyped perceptions of Arabs and Jews, Middle East and West, in a different way from Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, who perform different Arab and Jewish musics (and thus finding shared musics and heritage), in addition to combining Arabs and Jews in a single ensemble. Said points out in his book, *Orientalism*:

When one uses categories like Oriental and Western as both the starting and the end points of analysis, research, public policy . . . the result is usually to polarize the distinction—the Oriental becomes more Oriental, the Westerner more Western—and limit the human encounter between different cultures, traditions, and societies.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 45-46.

In other words, by continually defining Arabs and Jews as two distinct entities, whether through definitions of musics or language about each other, the distinctions seem to become larger, limiting the ability of either side to interact with the other. By taking on two labels that can be seen as contradictory—“The Arab-Jewish Ensemble” and “under the auspices of the IPO”—Shesh Besh tries to present Jews and Arabs working together. However, these titles may also contribute to division between Arabs and Jews if one believes that the IPO controls the Arab musicians. For instance, one can ask who decides on repertoire, performance opportunities, marketing, etc.? Is it the musicians (Jewish and Arab), the IPO, or both? The musicians say that they are part of the decision-making process, but the audience may still question their role. Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra strive to blur the boundaries between Arabs and Jews by finding common ground, but do they also contribute to Arab-Jewish divisions? As mentioned above, the language the groups use often point to distinctions rather than similarities. This is due in part to the available vocabulary that the groups can use to explain their music and goals. The ensembles are often limited by language.

The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra’s marketing is similar to that of Shesh Besh, though they tend to work on a smaller scale. There were free flyers available at the concert I attended. Flyers did not provide a program for the concert, but there was some general information on the ensemble, most of it in Hebrew (see Figures 8a and 8b).

The idea behind the youth orchestra flyer is simple: catch attention with a collage of young orchestra members performing and interacting, name the group, and provide a

short quote that sums up the group's hopes that music can provide a line of communication between young Israeli musicians. The back provides some general information about the group, including a website and contact information for the group's parent organization, Jeneusses Musicales Israel.

The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra CD cover art is just as clear with its message (see Figure 9). The album cover art is straightforward, picturing the orchestra performing, several shots of orchestra members playing and laughing together, and the ensemble's name in English, Hebrew, and Arabic. Arab mural art appears above the orchestra photo and is somewhat similar to the art used by Shesh Besh. The four pictures at the top of the album cover illustrate the youth orchestra's Arab-Jewish makeup through instruments. The first picture from the left shows two young people playing clarinet, a Western instrument. The second picture shows orchestra members playing *'ud*, a Middle Eastern instrument. The third picture shows several musicians playing violin, which is an instrument used in Western classical and Middle Eastern musics. Finally, the fourth photograph shows a Western flutist and a young man laughing as he plays *qanun*; the transverse flute is a Western instrument, while the *qanun* is Middle Eastern.



Figure 8a: Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra Flyer, front page⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, flyer, obtained 8 July 2007.

נוער מוסיקלי בישראל
Jeunesses Musicales Israel
דוד בגין 55, חל אביב 67138 Tel Aviv
טל: 972-3-5622701 · פקס: 972-3-5622703
www.youth-music.org.il · youth-mu@zahav.net.il
ער. 580064103



"נוער מוסיקלי בישראל" היא עמותה, בסיוע משרד המדע, התרבות והספורט, ומטרתה קרוב ילדים, נוער וקהלים חדשים למוסיקה אמנותית-איכותית. העמותה פועלת כסניף של הפדרציה הבינלאומית Jeunesses Musicales International המאגדת כ-40 ארצות ומרכזת בבריסל. מנהל העמותה דר' מאיר ויזל כיהן כנשיא הפדרציה בשנים 98-1996. יו"ר הנהלת העמותה הוא המלחין והפדגוג זוכה פרס ישראל, הפרופ' צבי אבני.

תזמורת הנוער המוסיקלי היהודי-ערבי

התזמורת מונה 25 נגנים צעירים, גילאי 15 עד 25, מכל רחבי הארץ, ערבים ויהודים. היא הוקמה בשנת 2003, בחסות אונסק"ו, ביוזמת מנהל הנוער המוסיקלי בישראל, דר' מאיר ויזל. בתזמורת כלי נגינה המשלבים מזרח ומערב: כלי קשת ונשיפה, עוד וקאנון, כינור מערבי ומזרחי, חליל וחלילית, הקשה ופסנתר. המנצח הוא ויסאם ג'ובראן, מוסיקאי מחונן מנצרת שהשתלם ברוסיה ובגרמניה. הרפרטואר כולל יצירות חדשות ועיבודים מקוריים של מוסיקה ערבית מסורתית ושילובים של מערב-מזרח. בנוסף לקונצרטים ברחבי הארץ ערכה התזמורת שלושה סיורי קונצרטים בחו"ל שקצרו הצלחה רבה.

פורום נאמני התזמורת

יו"ר הפורום היא הגב' שולמית אלוני. חברים בו אנשי ציבור, חינוך ואנשי עסקים, המוכנים לתמוך במפעל החשוב של התזמורת. ההצטרפות אינה כרוכה בדמי חבר. חברי הפורום מוזמנים פעמיים-שלוש בשנה לאירוע חברתי המשלב הרצאה בנושא אקטואלי, מוסיקה, ודין. אחת לשנה מתקיים אירוע חגיגי שאליו מרים חבר הפורום את תרומתו, ומביא חברים חדשים לפורום.

בואו להיות אתנו – תנו כתף לדו-קיום!

Figure 8b: Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra Flyer, back page⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Ibid.

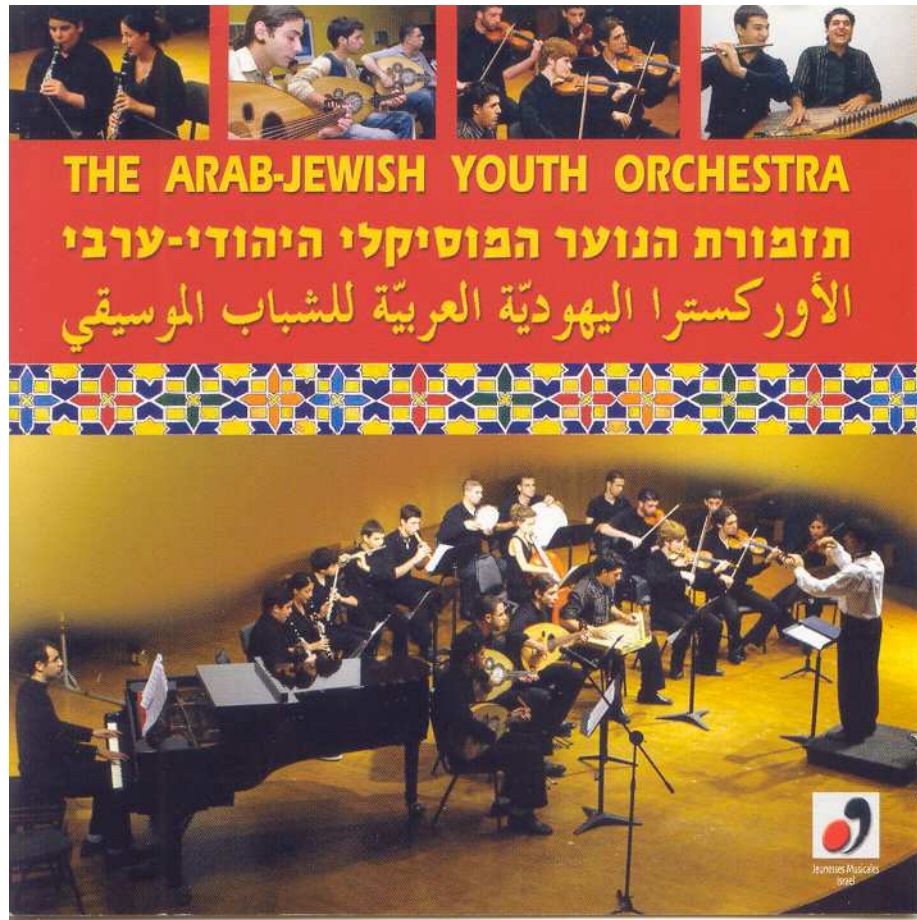


Figure 9: Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra Album Cover⁹⁸

As with Shesh Besh, marketing is important for the youth orchestra. Meir explained:

They say if you do and you didn't publicize, you didn't do. It's very parallel to that, so . . . if my orchestra is playing today in front of 200 people somewhere in Israel, I want not only my orchestra to know about it, not only the 200 people to

⁹⁸ *The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra*, The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, Wisam Gibran, conductor, Jeunesses Musicales Israel, compact disc.

know about it, but also other people in the community to read in the papers that this happened. And it does something, people go, “Hmm, a Jewish-Arab orchestra. That’s nice.” I’m sure it’s a little step forward in the trust and in the knowing each other process.⁹⁹

For both ensembles, marketing their product—a mixture of musics and peoples from the Arab and Jewish world—is essential not only to their survival as ensembles but for the success of their goals to open lines of communication between Arab and Jewish Israelis. As Meir said, “if you do and you didn’t publicize, you didn’t do.” If no one hears of these ensembles, they will not hear or see them perform. They will not know about their goals. Even if this is only a little step forward, as Meir asserts, it is still a step forward, but both ensembles must build an audience and expand that audience over time to take that step.

However, the message Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra try to present through advertising is only part of how they are perceived. Though the ensembles combine Middle Eastern and Western, Jewish and Arab, musical styles to try to promote Arab-Jewish communication and cooperation, the combination of styles can be read another way. For instance, Shesh Besh’s arrangement of *Shibolet Ba’sade* can be heard as Orientalist control and manipulation of Middle Eastern elements through their usage. The form of the piece can be read as follows: Section One is a light Western classical section that puts the Western listener at ease. In Section Two, the listener hears the call of the exotic Oriental world from the *ney*, tempered and civilized by the Western flute. Finally,

⁹⁹ Wiesel, interview.

Section Three is a carefree Middle Eastern dance that presents exotic Oriental musical elements with the civilizing presence of Western musical instruments and Western classically-trained musicians. None of the musicians I spoke to heard the music this way. On the contrary, they are proud of the mixture of styles in *Shibolet Ba'sade*. In fact, very few people I have spoken with in Israel or the United States hear *Shibolet Ba'sade* as an Orientalist colonization of Middle Eastern music. However, the musicians may have to address the fact that the projects and their music can be seen in this way at some point in the future.

Additionally, the Western-style concert context in which Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra perform can be seen as an Orientalist construct. The concerts I attended placed the ensembles on a stage, while the audience sat quietly. Between pieces, the audience clapped but did not participate in the music-making through singing, dancing, or interrupting the music, at any time. The performers wore Western concert dress, again bowing to Western classical norms. The image these ensembles present is as important as the music they play, so does leaning toward Western art music traditions in their concerts glorify Western over Middle Eastern traditions? Perhaps the style of concerts is designed to attract a specific audience, such as well-off Israelis, Europeans, or Americans. When working with children, Shesh Besh attempts to overcome the boundaries of Western classical performance practice by involving the children in the music-making (i.e., singing along, clapping, learning new instruments, etc.). To continue to overcome boundaries between Arabs and Jews, it may become

necessary for these ensembles to do more performances that move outside of the Western classical concert hall format.

The numerous possible positive and negative readings of Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra relate to the many interpretations of Paul Simon's *Graceland* that Meintjes posits in her article.¹⁰⁰ She points out that one can see *Graceland* as a colonialist appropriation of African musics by Paul Simon, a white European musician. At the same time, some herald *Graceland* as a groundbreaking album that helped catapult groups like Ladysmith Black Mambazo to fame and drew attention to apartheid in South Africa. There are numerous ways to analyze *Graceland*, and they are all valid. The same is true of Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra. One can see the ensembles in any number of positive or negative lights. For this reason, one should not praise or criticize them unquestioningly.

In the next chapter, I will ask who these ensembles benefit, why, and how, by looking at their membership and audiences. I will also explore their means of financial support, asking who they are marketed to, who supports them, and why.

¹⁰⁰ Meintjes.

CHAPTER IV

“INSPIRED BY THIS IDEA OF JEWS AND ARABS BEING TOGETHER”

In Chapter Two, I briefly discussed the membership and goals of Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra. In this chapter, I will elaborate on that information by exploring the musicians and the audience of both ensembles.

Both ensembles contain only Israeli citizens. Including Israeli Arab and Jewish musicians is a central focus, and reaching beyond Israel for membership is not a priority for either ensemble. In the case of Shesh Besh, this is important for funding as well as for Arab-Jewish relations within Israel.¹⁰¹ The group receives some of its financial support from the Abraham Fund, which only sponsors projects for Israeli citizens. Thus, to receive some of its funding, Shesh Besh focuses on Israeli Jews and Arabs. Neither group includes members from the Palestinian Territories. Double bassist Peter Marck explained that, “our first responsibility in education in the orchestra is not to Palestinians but to Israeli Arabs.”¹⁰² In other words, the projects should first concentrate on building relationships between Israeli Arabs and Jews.

¹⁰¹ Marck, interview.

¹⁰² Ibid. Israeli Arab and Palestinian identities are complex, as discussed in Chapter One. For the purpose of this dissertation, Israeli Arabs are Israeli citizens, while Palestinians are not Israeli citizens. This reading does not reflect the many complexities of Arab identity (e.g. many Israeli Arabs self-identify as Palestinians) but reflects the language used by ensemble members as they describe the ensembles and their goals.

Focusing on Israeli citizens is still a considerable task. As mentioned in Chapter One, most Jews and Arabs live apart in Israel. For Jews, the separation is even more significant than for Arabs. Peter explained, “the Jewish members of [Shesh Besh] would have the slightest contact with Arabs without the ensemble. The Arab members know our society inside and out.”¹⁰³ For the Jewish musicians of Shesh Besh and the youth orchestra, their first contact with Arabs is usually through these ensembles. On the other hand, the Arab members tend to have more contact with Jews. This is a result of numbers and power structures.¹⁰⁴ It is easier for a Jew in Israel to live among Jews, work with Jews, and have little to no contact with the Arab minority. However, Arabs often have contact with the Jewish majority simply because there are many more Jews than Arabs in the country. Additionally, Jews often hold positions of power, such as government bureaucratic positions or professorships at conservatories, which make it necessary for Arabs to have contact with them to get documents processed or musical instruction. For instance, Sami Khshiboun, Arab violinist for Shesh Besh, studied music with Jewish teachers and performed with Jews before his work with Shesh Besh.¹⁰⁵ Whether it is a first meeting or not, Jewish and Arab ensemble members value the opportunity to meet and build relationships with each other.

¹⁰³ Marck, correspondence, 25 June 2007.

¹⁰⁴ Tamar S. Hermann and Ephraim Yuchtman-Yaar, “Two People Apart: Israeli Jews’ and Arabs’ Attitudes Toward the Peace Process,” in *The Middle East Peace Process: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Ilan Peleg (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 61-83.

¹⁰⁵ Khshiboun, interview.

Arab, Jewish, and Israeli Identity

In *Orientalism*, Edward Said writes, “Can one divide human reality, as indeed human reality seems to be genuinely divided, into clearly different cultures, histories, traditions, societies, even races, and survive the consequences humanly?”¹⁰⁶ Said asks here if we can survive the consequences of dividing human beings into distinct groups. Divisions between Arabs and Jews in Israel, whether they are cultural, linguistic, or financial, are a primary cause of unrest and conflict in the region. But are Israeli Jews and Arabs two different groups, with no commonalities? Arab and Jewish identities in Israel seem on the surface to be two distinct entities, but at the same time, there are a number of similarities, including musical roots. Shelemay discusses shared musical roots in *Let Jasmine Rain Down*, pointing out that Syrian Jews claim Arab music as their own, even using it in religious services.¹⁰⁷ Hebrew lyrics and the fact that Jews claim it as theirs, makes the music Jewish. However, it is also Arab because Arabs wrote many of the melodies and claim this music as theirs. In short, Syrian Jews and Arabs share musical roots. Many of the musicians with whom I spoke mentioned that Jews and Arabs share musics and other similarities. By discovering similarities, the members of Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra do not have to give up their identities as Jews or Arabs, but are able to deepen their understanding of others and themselves as a diverse Israeli population. Additionally, by moving beyond the Arab-Jewish divide, they are

¹⁰⁶ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 45. Hereafter Said.

¹⁰⁷ Shelemay.

trying to combat the consequences of division that Said mentions, including separation and violence.

Difficulty arises when members of the ensembles encounter stereotypes and racism. For instance, Peter tells of two separate incidents when Arab members of Shesh Besh were bumped from flights by security at Tel Aviv's airport. Shesh Besh often flies from Tel Aviv to Europe and the United States on tour. Making one's way through the security at the Tel Aviv airport is a long process. Before even checking in for a flight, one has already gone through a couple of levels of security, showing a passport, answering questions, and having bags scanned. After checking in, more scans and questions await. For a Jewish Israeli (or for an American or European) the process is long but not difficult. A passport and patience will see these groups through the security process. For an Arab Israeli, many things can go wrong. Israeli Arabs are identified as Arabs on their passports. This can lead to racial profiling on the part of airport security agents who see Arabs as potential terrorists.

The first time an Arab member of Shesh Besh was bumped from a flight, Peter described the situation as "very, very, very traumatic for all of us."¹⁰⁸ However, the musician in question was able to take a flight to join the rest of the ensemble the next day. The second time this occurred, Sami was stopped with Peter and a few others. As Peter told me about standing at a security check-point with Sami, he became increasingly frustrated and agitated. In interviews, the musicians were usually calm, collected, and

¹⁰⁸ Marck , interview.

articulate. However, as he recounted his experience with security, Peter became more exasperated, and he sometimes did not complete sentences or ideas as he recounted the story:

And we all went to security together. And Sami they started asking really stupid questions. And my wife and I were just, we were just so frustrated and embarrassed by the situation because it was a ridiculous . . . It was the day after they had found this guy with chemicals in his bag in London. And . . . the security person at the airport was just totally inflexible. [With increasing annoyance] And in the end I said to him . . . “Look, if I was carrying the violin and not Sami, you wouldn’t have even stopped me The violin is the violin. If you’ve got a problem with Sami, then take him off the flight. If you’ve got a problem with the violin, if I’d carried it no one . . . but don’t tell us that the problem is with the violin. Let’s not hide behind some kind of security issue here, which has nothing to” [Calming] In the end, Sami came the next day. Again. [Referring to the previous occasion when an Arab member was forced to travel later because of security issues at the Tel Aviv Airport.] I mean, and they were very nice about it, then, but this is when the real crunches happen.¹⁰⁹

The “real crunches” happen when Shesh Besh travels, but travel is not the only cause of these difficulties. The problem, as Peter sees it, is that the Arab musicians are singled out because they are identified as Arabs on their passports. Obvious identification as an Arab, combined with racial profiling by security agents, ends in Israeli Arabs being unfairly singled out and removed from flights. In the end, each musician was able to take a later flight, but the experience of being separated because of ethnicity exasperates the musicians.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

A difficulty facing Israelis when I visited Israel was the continued tension on Israel's borders. The 2006 war with Hezbollah was still fresh in many people's memories. Violence in the Gaza Strip, due to fighting between Hamas and Fatah, was also a constant concern. The conflicts brought out the best in some. During the Israeli war with Hezbollah in the summer of 2006, missiles rained down on Northern Israel, even reaching as far south as Tel Aviv. Shesh Besh could not rehearse in public buildings, like the Mann Auditorium, because these sites were potential targets. Instead, the ensemble met at Peter's home in Tel Aviv.¹¹⁰ After one rehearsal, Sami decided he didn't want to brave the missiles to drive back to Haifa for the night. However, Ramsis, who had ridden down with Sami to Tel Aviv, wanted to go home to be with his family. In spite of the danger and the hassle of driving to Haifa and back, Peter took Ramsis home. To Peter, this was simply what a friend would do.

On the other hand, the conflict also feeds stereotypes and tensions between Arabs and Jews. One Israeli musician told me that I "should go to the border of Gaza [to hear] another kind of music that's Jewish-Arab."¹¹¹ He was responding to the conflict in Gaza and along its border with Israel negatively, referring to the "music" of gunfire instead of the music created by the Arab-Jewish ensembles. While Peter responded to conflict by trying to take care of his Arab friends and colleagues, this musician focused on the

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Anonymous Israeli musician, statements made to author, 15 July 2007, Tel Aviv, Israel., digital recording.

violence along Israel's border with the Gaza Strip. Peter saw Arab individuals who needed his help, while the other musician saw conflict between two distinct sides.

Meir pointed out that many people have a preconceived notion of what an Arab should look like. Head coverings, long robes, dark skin and hair, and a number of other physical stereotypes are associated with the Arab ethnicity. However, as Meir and many of the other musicians I spoke with pointed out, there are many Jews in Israel of Middle Eastern ancestry. Trying to determine who is Arab and who is Jewish based on appearance alone can be impossible, as I noted when watching the ensembles perform. The Arab members were not dressed in stereotypical Arab clothing, as Meir defined it, (robes, head coverings, etc.), and the stereotypical differences in coloring or appearance between Jews and Arabs were not visible. After some investigation, I learned that one dark-skinned, dark-haired young man in The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra was Jewish, while the young man sitting next to him, with fair skin, freckles, and red hair, was Arab. Meir brought up the stereotypes mentioned above, but neither he, nor the other Israeli Jewish musicians with whom I spoke, believe that all Arabs are the same. However, some Israeli Jews do trust negative characterizations of and oversimplification of Arab identity. Additionally, stereotypes about Arab appearance and dress frequently appear in the American media, making similarities between Arabs and Jews seem unlikely to some Westerners.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, religious affiliation was not a strong identifier for the musicians with whom I spoke. Religious differences are a key issue in the Arab-

Jewish conflict. Can the largely secular presentation of these ensembles and their musicians speak to resolving the Arab-Jewish conflict? In other words, do ensembles made up of men and women who do not strongly identify with Judaism, Islam, or Christianity, sidestep one of the most complex and deeply-rooted causes of conflict: religious difference based on strongly-held beliefs? I am not prepared to answer these questions in this dissertation. However, it is important that the musicians in Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra share an identity as musicians. Perhaps the model these ensembles present can even point toward shared beliefs among the different religious identities and begin to overcome religious stereotypes (e.g. all Muslims are terrorists).

The stereotypes do not hold up to scrutiny, yet they still exist and must be overcome inch by inch in the ensembles. As Brinner points out, “The labels Israeli, Palestinian, Arab, and Jew are rife with implications and limitations. They are frequently invoked to denote categories juxtaposed in stark contrast, but they only work in this way if we ignore inherent contradictions and commonalities.”¹¹² When looking at the members of Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, one can see the similarities between the Arab and Jewish musicians. Constructed boundaries between Jews and Arabs are difficult to maintain when one cannot tell the difference, visually or aurally, between a Jewish or an Arab musician. The divisions between the two groups

¹¹² Brinner, subsection: “Introduction,” 2.

often do not hold up when viewed through the lens of musical commonalities and individual complexities.

The musicians with whom I spoke were open-minded individuals who truly care about these ensembles, their missions, and their fellow citizens. For the most part, I heard messages of acceptance of the other and his/her music. Those moments in which stereotypes crept in reminded me that identity is multifaceted, contains many contradictions, and changes constantly. The musicians can embrace one another through their identities as musicians, intellectuals, and most of all individuals. At the same time, they still have powerful ties to their individual ethnic groups, which are still defined, at least in part, by their differences from one another. However, finding one shared identity, such as that of musicians, can create new identities and provide a way to see more similarities.

Does identity help or hinder these projects? Identity is multifaceted. The musicians in Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra share an identity as musicians, but they also have differing identities as Arabs, Jews, Christians, Muslims, men, women, etc. Which of these many identities is strongest? Can layers of identity, such as being a musician and a Jew or Arab, create confusion for the musicians and audience members? Said writes in *Orientalism* that,

The construction of identity . . . involves the construction of opposites and “others” whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from “us.” Each age and society re-creates its “Others.” Far from a static thing then, identity of self or of “other” is a much

worked-over historical, social, intellectual, and political process that takes place as a contest involving individuals and institutions in all societies.¹¹³

History and memory in the Middle East affect the identities of Israeli Arabs and Jews. Rogan and Shlaim point out that Arab states and Israel have written the history of the 1948-1949 Arab-Israeli War in different ways.¹¹⁴ In both cases, countries have woven “a fabric of myths” to legitimize their actions during and after the war, to gain support from their population and other nations, and to demonize the other side.¹¹⁵ The differing memories of history in Israel can separate Arabs and Jews. This makes finding common ground even more important because Jews and Arabs in Israel must build a collective memory, or identity, to create an “us.”

There is a concerted effort on the part of the musicians to create an “us” as colleagues. However, the “us” and “them” aspects of identity can also divide the musicians. The official stance of the Israeli government, denying a Palestinian state, reinforces the separation of Arab and Jewish identities. In *Music and the Racial Imagination*, Philip Bohlman writes that, “The ultimate act of racializing is the denial of place, that is, the removal of conditions of belonging.”¹¹⁶ Israeli Arabs, though they are citizens of Israel, feel disenfranchised by Israel’s refusal to allow a Palestinian state to

¹¹³ Said, 332.

¹¹⁴ Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim, “Introduction,” in *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*, ed. Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1-11.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 2.

¹¹⁶ Philip V Bohlman, “The Remembrance of Things Past: Music, Race, and the End of History in Modern Europe,” in *Music and the Racial Imagination*, ed. Ronald Radano and Philip V. Bohlman (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 645.

exist. They also feel that they do not belong because of segregation and limitations they face in Israel: living in different neighborhoods, attending different schools, and even dealing with different government bureaucracies (army, licensure, etc.). If one looks at Bohlman's quote another way, ensembles like Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra can provide a sense of belonging. The question is, can the sense of belonging as a musician overcome feelings of difference and lack of belonging in everyday life?

The fact that identity is constantly changing can lead to greater acceptance of the other and more opportunities to meet. Jews and Arabs do not have to be prisoners of past beliefs, histories, or stereotypes. They can allow their thinking and identities to change as they learn more about each other. Involvement in a musical ensemble, where musicians can share a musical identity, provides a social and institutional identity base—a way to create an “us.” It also provides an opportunity for Israeli Arabs and Jews to work together as equals. Bishara Naddaf of Shesh Besh says, “We’re first of all musicians and human beings, and in that there’s no difference between Arab and Jew We love each other and we embrace each other.”¹¹⁷ Thus, identity as fellow musicians, friends, and collaborators can help these projects. An “us” is created that crosses boundaries between Jews and Arabs. At the same time, identity has the ability to hinder these projects when identity as a Jew or an Arab prevents someone from accepting an “us” that includes people from the other side.

¹¹⁷ Bishara Naddaf, quoted in Tom Tugend, “Spectator- Music First, Politics After,” *JewishJournal.com* (24 June 2005), accessed 21 July 2007, available at <http://www.jewishjournal.com/home/print.php?id=14286>.

Israeli Audiences

Thus far, I have focused primarily on the musicians involved in these projects, rather than their audiences. This is in part because I did not interview audience members during my stay in Israel. However, I can offer the perspective from my own experience as an audience member, and my observations of others attending the performances. It is important to examine the audiences for Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra because they can provide a different perspective from that of the musicians, as they tend not to be regularly involved with these projects. Studying audience reaction is also a gauge of who these projects influence (if anyone), and how.

The Shesh Besh and Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra concerts I attended took place in Tel Aviv at concert or recital halls. At both concerts, the audience was primarily middle-aged or older. They were Hebrew speakers, though many also understood and spoke English quite well. They were well-dressed and adhered to Western classical concert etiquette, clapping between pieces, but quiet and still when music was played.

Except when they play for school children, which takes place in Arab as well as Jewish schools, Shesh Besh's audience is primarily Jewish.¹¹⁸ Irit estimated that the audience for the IPO and Shesh Besh at concerts like the one I attended is 99.9 percent Jewish, though she admitted that this was not a researched figure, so she "could be wrong by half a percent."¹¹⁹ For both ensembles, playing for Arabs as well as Jews is important,

¹¹⁸ Arnheim, interview.

¹¹⁹ Rub-Levy, interview.

so they travel to Arab areas of the country (e.g. an Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra concert in Nazareth).

For both ensembles, performing for a mixed audience of Jews and Arabs is rare. This is due primarily to the segregation of Arabs and Jews in Israel. The ensembles are based in Tel Aviv, a city with a majority Jewish population. When they travel to other cities and towns in Israel, they usually find similar situations, where one group is the majority in the area. Members of one ethnicity do not tend to travel to another city to hear a concert. Speaking about attendance of IPO concerts, Irit said that the Arab musicians in Shesh Besh “are really professional, good musicians. But they live in Nazareth and Haifa, and they never come to a concert.”¹²⁰ In cities and towns like Nazareth and Haifa, with large Arab populations, music is still an important part of life, often part of ceremonies and celebrations, like weddings. The genres performed tend to be Arab art and folk. However, concerts of Western classical music are not as common.

For the musicians, meeting regularly in Tel Aviv or elsewhere is part of the job. Wisam Matanis, a violinist in The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, told me that the orchestra meets “once in a month (or more) for rehearsals, usually in Tel Aviv.”¹²¹ For musicians anywhere, it is not unusual to travel for a gig or a rehearsal. It is part of the job, but it is also part of the social environment of music-making. For an audience member, however, traveling even 15 minutes to a nearby city can be too great a demand on time,

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Wisam Matanis, violinist with The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, e-mail correspondence with author, 2007. Hereafter Matanis, correspondence.

energy, and finances. The decision to attend a concert can also be more difficult because of continuing Jewish-Arab tensions in the area, especially if one feels s/he might be one of a minority group attending the concert.

A Wider Audience

For both ensembles, a foreign audience and financial support from that audience is key to success. Both ensembles have websites, as do individual ensemble members and organizations from whom the ensembles receive support.¹²² These websites provide information on the musicians, the ensembles, and the ensembles' goals. Some of them also provide sound files and/or videos of the groups performing. These websites can attract a wider audience because they are easy to find if one has a computer and internet access. In fact, I discovered both ensembles through their websites.

Much of Shesh Besh's funding comes from the American Friends of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (AFIPO), a primarily Jewish organization. The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra is supported by Jeunesses Musicales International (JMI), a "non-profit, non-government international association with formal relations to UNESCO and other cross-border institutions."¹²³

¹²² "American Friends of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra," website, available at <http://www.afipo.org/>; Yossi Arnheim, "Yossi Arnheim Flute," website, available at <http://www.arnheim.info/>; JMI website; "Keynote," website, available at <http://www.ipo-kids.org/keynote.asp>; Bishara Naddaf, "Bishara Naddaf: Biography and Music Credits," website, available at http://www.shaarethorah.net/rhythms/bishara_naddaf.htm; "Youth and Music Israel" website.

¹²³ JMI website.

Peter explained that Shesh Besh got its start as the result of an IPO project for Israeli and Palestinian children:

At the end of the last concert of the project, I had brought a group from the United States to see, people who support the orchestra, and they said to me, “This is what we always wanted.” And then from that event, the education department was founded. They put the seed money to begin our educational project . . . they were inspired by this idea of Jews and Arabs being together.¹²⁴

The AFIPO set up an educational fund for the orchestra, which today provides about \$500,000 per year.¹²⁵ Shesh Besh receives part of that budget to pay the musicians, fund travel, etc. Peter asserts that,

. . . beyond what we do with the orchestra, the youth concerts and the school concerts, our real effectiveness is outside of the country, both for the image of Israel and the Israel Philharmonic and the question of fundraising and support of our friends [primarily the AFIPO], who think it [is] absolutely essential that the project with the Arab population continue.¹²⁶

The audience that tends to fund the Shesh Besh project and welcome it most enthusiastically (beyond Israeli classrooms) is an international audience made up primarily of Americans and Europeans. Shesh Besh goes on tour in Europe or the United States at least once a year, sometimes with the IPO, and sometimes alone. Peter believes

¹²⁴ Marck, interview.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

that the ensemble gives its international audience a good feeling. I can attest to this from my own position as an American audience member of the ensemble. Before I began to research the ensembles and Israel, just hearing about them made me feel more optimistic about Arab-Jewish relations in Israel. Listening to the music and hearing about these Arab-Jewish collaborations (primarily on their websites) combined to heighten my emotional reaction to the groups. Learning more and meeting Israeli musicians tempered my reaction by helping me to see the reality—that this is a complex situation, involving complex human beings and issues, which requires much thought. Peter sums it up by saying, “the Europeans [and Americans] think it’s a great step forward, you know. And I think, well, either we’re more blasé about it in Israel, or they’re naïve about it, or it’s somewhere in the middle for everybody.”¹²⁷ In other words, part of the reason that Shesh Besh receives more funding and audience support from foreigners is that the foreigners look at the project more optimistically, and perhaps more naïvely, than the Israeli audience. This does not mean that the Israeli audience does not respond; it simply means that they are not as convinced that musical collaboration alone can help solve the Arab-Jewish conflict in Israel.

The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra has a similar audience to that of Shesh Besh. Meir says that the audience is,

... usually very positive. And then abroad even more so because abroad they can hardly understand. They think that Arabs and Jews are enemies. How can two

¹²⁷ Ibid.

enemies sit and do music together? Here, we understand better that we can get Arab Israelis to sit with Jews. But in Europe, the reaction to performances is much stronger, and they are astonished by this.¹²⁸

Meir makes an important point here. It is not that the youth orchestra (or Shesh Besh, for that matter) does not appeal to an Israeli audience. Rather, the idea of Arabs and Jews working together is more novel for foreign audiences, who often fail to see the many shades of gray in the Arab-Jewish conflict. A foreigner might see animosity, while Israelis see separation. A non-Israeli might see these ensembles as minor miracles, bringing together enemies as friends, while Israelis see them as small steps forward in building lines of communication and trust between people who simply do not know each other. This kind of enthusiasm for projects like Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra from foreigners can provide an advantage for the groups, as it can lead to funding, touring opportunities, and increased visibility abroad. However, non-Israelis' misperceptions of these projects, and Israeli society, can also be a hindrance to these projects and a contributor to continued conflict in the region. Foreigners who do not understand Arab-Jewish relations in Israel, or the small steps some Israelis take every day toward mutual understanding, can actually hurt the peace process in Israel because they look for a quick, sweeping, simple solution to a highly complex problem. Rather than seeing individuals striving to cooperate, non-Israelis often see two sides with nothing in common who must be helped (or coerced) in their peace efforts.

¹²⁸ Wiesel, interview.

Who Benefits?

There are many different kinds of benefits that could be derived from Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra. For the musicians, one benefit is the opportunity to perform music with other talented musicians and to build friendships. For the audiences, hearing new music and seeing the musicians perform is a benefit, which can lead to more contact with, or at least compassion for, the other side. Parent organizations, like the IPO and JMI, benefit from the publicity these groups bring. Monetarily, some of the musicians, the ensembles, and their parent organizations, can benefit from ticket and CD sales.

Looking at the audiences of Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, one wonders who actually benefits from these projects. If the primary financial backers are foreigners, are Israelis affected at all by these Arab-Jewish musical collaborations? If the audiences tend not to mix Arabs and Jews, do the audience members still benefit from seeing Arabs and Jews interacting on stage?

The ensemble members spend time together rehearsing, performing, and interacting as colleagues and friends. In his dissertation on the arts in peace-building activities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Craig Mitchell Zelizer concluded that those who actively participate in artistic activities with the “other” seem to benefit more than those who simply view these activities as audience members.¹²⁹ This is in large part because

¹²⁹ Craig Mitchell Zelizer, “The Role of Artistic Processes in Peacebuilding in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” Ph.D. diss., (George Mason University, 2004), 197.

the participants spend time together, work together, and communicate with one another to create a product, like music.

Efforts to bring together warring parties to communicate and create an artistic product together are not new, nor are they unique to Israel. Croatian ethnomusicologist Svanibor Pettan organized a choir called *Azra* in Norway to bring Norwegians and Bosnian refugees in Norway together through music.¹³⁰ Bosnian immigrants and Norwegians met, learned each other's musics, and performed together. Through this process, they learned to appreciate each other's music and each other. Scholar Dave Duggan wrote about his conflict resolution efforts in Northern Ireland in "Arts Approaches to the Conflict in Northern Ireland."¹³¹ In his work, he used theater, art, story-telling, and literature as aids in group conflict resolution settings. In both these projects (and others like them), the participants work together to create an artistic product. Pettan and Duggan write that their projects met with success, as participants spent time together, communicated with one another, and expressed themselves artistically together.

Wisam Matanis summed up the advantages for the members of The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra as follows:

¹³⁰ Svanibor Pettan, "Making the Refugee Experience Different: 'Azra' and the Bosnians in Norway," in *War, Exile, Everyday Life: Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Renata Jambrešić Kirin and Maja Povrzanović (Zagreb, Croatia: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, 1996), 245-255.

¹³¹ Dave Duggan, "Arts Approaches to the Conflict in Northern Ireland," in *Arts Approaches to Conflict*, ed. Marian Liebmann (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1996), 335-346.

We love talking about everything and that's when we feel how connected we are; many people don't believe we have many things in common, but after all we live in the same country, we were born into this conflict, and it's our duty as the leaders of the future to promote the dialog between Israelis and Palestinians. The relations are improving between the two sides because young people are more opened to the other side. It gets better with . . . time, in my opinion. We just need time.¹³²

Getting together to play music provides a common ground for the musicians. That common ground can lead them to see other commonalities and to “talk about everything.” Many of the musicians enjoy the benefits of regular contact with each other and a common interest in music.

Wisam points out that he thinks young people are more open to meeting with the other and building relationships. Yossi said something similar when talking to me about Shesh Besh's work in Israeli schools:

When you get into the school, then the kids, they get a fantastic understanding of what's happening in the ensemble. And they don't seem to care if the guy is Arabic [sic] or Jewish, and they know what it's about. In general society, I'm not sure—we don't really have an influence.¹³³

Perhaps young people are more curious, as stated in the youth orchestra flyer discussed in Chapter Three (Figure 8a), or perhaps they are more open-minded to change and interaction with others. Maybe they have less to lose by contact with the other side

¹³² Matanis, correspondence.

¹³³ Arnheim, interview.

than older Israelis, who must think of jobs, homes, and families. Whatever the reasons, both ensembles feel that reaching young Israelis is an important first step in promoting communication and trust between Arabs and Jews.

Inevitably, there are those who these projects cannot or do not reach. For instance, extremists on both sides, who are adamantly opposed to interaction between Jews and Arabs, will not listen to the message of these ensembles, no matter how loudly it is played. In the case of Muslim Arabs, there is sometimes an additional impediment to musical communication because of the ambivalent place of music within Islam. In *Music in Egypt: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*, Scott Marcus discusses the interpretation of music as *harām*, or “forbidden.”¹³⁴ He points out that the *Qur’an* does not address the acceptability of music in Islam, but there are contradictory passages in the *hadith* conversely approving and rejecting music.¹³⁵ Thus, there are Muslim Arabs in Israel who are not likely to be reached by these ensembles’ musical message because their religious beliefs reject music.¹³⁶

There are those who cannot be reached by a musical ensemble made up of Arabs and Jews, but this is not the case for all Israelis. Music education, one of the prime goals of Shesh Besh, is an important part of drawing in new audiences. Sami points out that “it takes an audience above a certain level of understanding that’ll know what’s happening”

¹³⁴ Scott L. Marcus, *Music in Egypt: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 89-90.

¹³⁵ The *hadith* are collected teachings and sayings of Mohammed and his followers, which many Muslims study in addition to the *Qur’an*.

¹³⁶ For more information on music as *harām*, see Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “Islam and Music: The Legal and the Spiritual Dimensions,” in *Enchanting Powers: Music in the World’s Religions*, ed. Lawrence E. Sullivan (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), 219-235.

to get across their message.¹³⁷ In other words, audience members need a basic understanding of the music played to enjoy hearing it and to open up to the larger message the groups are trying to communicate. Irit also believes that educating Shesh Besh's audience, children and adults, is key to the success of the group, but she does not think that hearing new music without first learning about it is necessarily detrimental. "Just to . . . make them think there are other artists, there is other music, there is another culture, and it's worthwhile And as much as they can hear it, again and again, with some time, they learn to like it."¹³⁸

However, approaching new music and new ideas, even with a base of education, requires that the musician or audience member is curious about, even supportive of, these ensembles and their missions. As Steven Brown writes in *Music and Manipulation*, "An important generalization that has emerged from persuasion research is that deeply felt attitudes are quite resistant to change"¹³⁹ Wisam Matanis points out that, "all [the] musicians who come to the orchestra are people who believe that Arabs and Jews CAN live together [capitalization in original e-mail correspondence]."¹⁴⁰ For these musicians, and other Israelis like them, there are advantages to joining the ensembles. Wisam goes on to explain that, "sitting with Jews and talking to them, I have an opportunity to settle many things with them, and I can also talk about everything with them. We learn more

¹³⁷ Khshiboun, interview.

¹³⁸ Rub-Levy, interview.

¹³⁹ Steven Brown, "Introduction: 'How Does Music Work?' Toward a Pragmatics of Musical Communication," in *Music and Manipulation: On the Social Uses and Social Control of Music*, ed. Steven Brown and Ulrik Volgsten (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 23. Hereafter, Brown.

¹⁴⁰ Matanis, correspondence.

about each other's culture and life, which is wonderful.”¹⁴¹ However, these advantages—the opportunity to speak with one another and develop an appreciation of each other's cultures—seem limited to those who are open to Arab-Jewish communication in the first place.

By presenting new musics to musicians and audience members, these groups help others to recognize that there are other, valid, complex musics beyond Western classical. A culture may express itself with other musical forms. Playing a variety of musics challenges the stereotype that Western classical music is high art that is somehow superior to other musics. By extension, the Westerners whose culture is expressed through Western classical music are superior to others. However, Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra show that Middle Eastern styles are just as sophisticated as Western classical, which also challenges the notion that the creators of Middle Eastern musics are less refined than Westerners.

However, it is important to note that, while Shesh Besh presents its audience with Middle Eastern and Western classical musics, most of what the IPO presents for music education in Israel revolves around Western classical music. The orchestra still prioritizes Western classical music, even as it presents Middle Eastern art and folk musics. Including non-Western styles in Keynote's music education program is an important first step, but if Middle Eastern music is perceived by Israelis as being less important than

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

Western classical repertoire, then the idea that Arab and Jewish, Western and Middle Eastern, musicians are all equals is undermined.

The message of Arab-Jewish communication and trust these ensembles are trying to send is sometimes undermined by the projects themselves. Language and musical styles can send multiple messages, depending on who is submitting them, but also on who is receiving them.

In the following chapter, I will ask whether these ensembles are successful in their goals to promote communication and trust between Israeli Arabs and Jews. I will consider the advantages and limitations, explored in this and previous chapters, presented by the musics performed, preexisting stereotypes, and musician and audience participation. I will also ask if the results obtained by these ensembles are unique to musical groups or can extend to other areas, such as other arts or sports.

CHAPTER V

“WE PLAY MUSIC TOGETHER”

Is it possible for a musical ensemble like Shesh Besh or The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra to promote communication and trust? Thus far, I have described the members of these ensembles; their repertoire, audiences, and location; and their marketing and financial support. In this chapter, I will ask whether these elements can come together to create an environment in which communication (or miscommunication) occurs. Further, I will investigate the nature of this communication—musical as well as verbal.

Communication

Communication can be defined as “something imparted, interchanged, or transmitted,” and as an “activity by one organism that changes or has the potential to change the behavior of other organisms.”¹⁴² For Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, imparting, interchanging, and transmitting a message of Arab-Jewish cooperation is a key goal. Both ensembles use a combination of Western and Middle Eastern styles of music to communicate their message. They mix the Arab and Jewish members of the ensembles and play for Arab and Jewish audiences to further

¹⁴² “Communication,” *Dictionary.com Unabridged* (v 1.1), based on the Random House Unabridged Dictionary (Random House, 2006), produced by Lexico Publishing Group, accessed 24 June 2007, available at <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/communication>.

communicate this message. They introduce the groups as Arab-Jewish to market ethnicity and ethnic musics and in an effort to reach a wider audience. Referring to the definition of communication above, the ensembles also hope to change the actions of others. Again, music-making and mixing Arab and Jewish musics and musicians for Jewish and Arab audiences is important. The hope is to overcome stereotypes and fears within both groups through communication.

Can music serve as a form of communication for these ensembles?

Communication is the transmission or exchange of ideas. The musicians with whom I spoke believe that music is a form of communication because it can act as a venue for the exchange of ideas between musicians and even audience members. Playing music together can also lead the musicians to increase verbal communication, emulating musical communication.

Manipulation is subtly different from communication. It often involves the transmission of ideas. However, the ideas are used to control a situation or influence another person or group, usually for one's own advantage.¹⁴³ Boyce-Tillman writes, "music is a manipulative art."¹⁴⁴ Humans consciously use music to capture attention, as in an advertisement; to intensify emotion, as in a movie score; and even to highlight the differences between "us" and "them," as in a patriotic anthem. In all these cases, music is assigned a cultural meaning by those using it. However, the meaning may differ from

¹⁴³ "Manipulate," *Dictionary.com Unabridged (v1.1)*, based on the Random House Unabridged Dictionary (Random House, 2006), produced by Lexico Publishing Group, accessed 26 February 2008, available at <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/manipulate>.

¹⁴⁴ Boyce-Tillman, 223.

performer to audience, as each interprets the message differently. In this way, music can be used for positive ends, such as bringing a group of people together, or for negative ends, such as emphasizing the differences between one group and another. Daniel Barenboim spoke of music's neutrality, saying it is "neither good nor bad, moral nor immoral It's like a knife A knife can be a murder instrument, or it can be a tool that allows you to cut bread and feed somebody. Music is what the human being makes of it."¹⁴⁵ Barenboim states that music is not good or bad, and it is true that music's sounds are neutral. However, the moment those sounds are organized by a composer or played by a performer, meaning is attached to them. Music is no longer neutral, though performers and listeners can reinterpret it. Viewed this way, music can be used to communicate or manipulate as long as meaning is supported by other cultural cues, such as writing program notes or seating Arabs and Jews together on stage. Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra endeavor to use musical styles and music-making as communicative devices, but it is possible for manipulation—of musicians or audiences—to creep in. As with language and marketing, as discussed earlier, it is possible for positive *or* negative use and interpretation to occur.

A key strength for music as a communication device is its communal nature. Peter says that, "the musical work together creates a natural closeness and respect. This carries over into our personal relationships."¹⁴⁶ Peter asserts that working together creates

¹⁴⁵ Jennie Rothenberg, "The Harmony and Dissonance of Daniel Barenboim," *Moment* 35 (August 2005), accessed 20 September 2006, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, ProQuest database.

¹⁴⁶ Marck, correspondence, 25 June 2007.

closeness and respect among the musicians. This is due at least in part to time spent working together, which creates a sense of community. It is true that one can play an instrument or sing alone in one's home, but almost any musical event requires community interaction. In an ensemble setting, musicians must work together to create their art, but even in a solo performance, there must be an audience present, with whom the musician interacts musically. Musical interaction revolves around emotion. The musician(s) tries to create an emotionally moving musical product, which will connect with other musicians and the audience. At the same time, audience members must actively and emotionally participate in the musical performance. Music-making is a communal activity that involves the musicians and the audience in the act of creating a musical product.

The communal activity of music-making is especially powerful for musicians, as Steven Brown points out: "When . . . coordination occurs in the context of group musical performance, it tends to create a symbolic feeling of equality and unity, one that produces a leveling of status among participants, thereby dampening within-group competition."¹⁴⁷ Music is a competitive field, and in some performance situations, such as in a concerto, one musician is more important than the others. However, Brown is referring less to equality of musical parts and more to a feeling of unity between musicians working together. I agree that working and performing together *can* make musicians feel unified and equal as a group, but this is not always the case. Additionally, one must consider

¹⁴⁷ Brown, 5.

what equality means in this context. Does it mean that all of the musicians have an equal say in how the musical product will sound? This is not always possible or practical, but it is possible to feel like equals when each musician has something—a bass line, a specific tone color, simply their presence on stage—to add to the performance.

Meir puts it another way: “When you have a group of people meet twice a month, and they do music together, of course they make friendships. It would be inhuman [not] to . . . How can you make music if you don’t like each other?”¹⁴⁸ Meir has a point. Especially with younger musicians, being friends, or at least respecting one another, can help create a musical product because the musicians are more likely to work together and listen to each other (musically and verbally). However, being friends is not essential to making music. I have played in large ensembles and chamber groups in which I did not like other performers, but we still rehearsed and performed together. Perhaps the experience was not as enjoyable as it might have been with friends, but it did not damage the musical product. However, the members of Shesh Besh and the youth orchestra assert that they build friendships as a result of meeting regularly to play together. Through this communal activity, they build cohesion based on musical similarities, while wearing down conflicts between Arab and Jewish members. This “good feeling,” as Peter would call it, can reach the audience as long as audience members open themselves to this musical community.

¹⁴⁸ Wiesel, interview.

For the musicians, playing new, interesting music is an important part of their work with these ensembles. For the audience, hearing new, interesting music is just as important. In his studies of Arab-Jewish ensembles, Brinner argues that the music played is very important because it provides an example of how cultures can be shared.¹⁴⁹ The ensembles he studied combined different musics just as they combined different members, showing that they could share their cultures and work together. By combining Western and Middle Eastern styles, Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra communicate a message of cooperation to their audience, and the audience is receptive to this message in part because the music is enjoyable. Musicians and audience members alike can begin to appreciate each other's musics, and from there, they can potentially learn to appreciate each other. Sami explains how music promotes communication this way: "When the soul and the substance is mutual for the musicians, then you can meet together. If we understand each other on stage, we'll understand each other also off the stage. That's very important."¹⁵⁰

Music also provides a common ground for musicians and audiences that can serve as a first step in building lines of communication and trust. However, music is not the "universal language" that so many believe it to be because music is not universal. Different cultures produce and enjoy different musics. For instance, Western listeners do not always enjoy or understand Japanese *kouta*, a genre of short songs.¹⁵¹ The timbre of

¹⁴⁹ Brinner, subsection: "Performing Coexistence," 3.

¹⁵⁰ Khshiboun, interview.

¹⁵¹ Based on personal observations and conversations with students as a teacher of World Music college classes.

the voice and the rhythmic and tonal organization are not familiar to many Westerners—they are not universal musical sounds. Ideas of what sounds are pleasing and musical are culture-dependent. In fact, ideas of what music *is* are culture-dependent. As mentioned in Chapter Four, some Muslims believe that music is *harām*, or forbidden. Because it is religious, *Qur’anic* chant is not considered music by many Muslims, but prayer, though to Western ears, the rhythms and pitches of the voice sound like music. Again, music is not universal. Like learning a foreign language, learning to appreciate and understand a new music is possible, but is not a given. One must learn to understand the cultural context of language *and* music to understand what sounds mean.¹⁵²

Quite often, joining these ensembles or listening to a concert requires an open mind. An educational project to build an appreciation for a new musical style can help. The work required to build a musical bridge necessitates that the musicians speak to one another about the music. However, building musical bridges is not unique to these musical projects. Peter pointed out that any ensemble, whether a small chamber group or a large orchestra, has to spend time together and communicate verbally and musically to achieve a refined performance.¹⁵³ Keith Sawyer, in “Music and Conversation,” points out that “in musical performance, the process *is* the product.”¹⁵⁴ Music-making is an active

¹⁵² DeNora, 88.

¹⁵³ Marck, interview.

¹⁵⁴ R. Keith Sawyer, “Music and Conversation,” in *Musical Communication*, ed. Dorothy Miell, Raymond MacDonald, and David J. Hargreaves (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 57. Sawyer refers to music-making as a process. I use his word here, but choose to refer to the act of music-making. The act of music-making implies an occurrence now, while process refers to a sequence of events. The act here and now is very important for these ensembles and their audiences. A process or act of making music goes beyond producing musical sound to include talk about music and listening to music.

endeavor for the musicians and their audiences in every rehearsal and performance.

Unlike art or literature, live music-making usually requires that the musicians be present “now” for a performance, and the audience hears and sees something that is actively “happening.” Even recorded music can stimulate a listener to tap his/her foot, sing along, or somehow participate in the musical performance. The ensembles use their CDs to engage listeners and to advertise themselves and their ideals. The members of Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra argue that the act of making and listening to music requires the musicians and the audience to collaborate during a performance, and even through a recording, because they must function together to create and appreciate the musical product.

Working together helps the musicians to develop a common “professional language of music,” Peter points out.¹⁵⁵ From there, communication about other aspects of life, from family to politics, can follow. Peter tells of two occasions when he realized that music was leading to deeper verbal communication:

There was a kind of turning point because we never talked politics. And we were at a dinner in Los Angeles together where there was a man sitting with us at the table We were speaking Hebrew And then he introduced himself to us, and he said, “My name is Yehuda Pearl. I’m the father of Daniel Pearl, who you might know was killed in Pakistan.” The journalist And I was sitting with . . . Ramsis, the *‘ud* player. And we got to talking to [Pearl], and one of the things that he said, which was very interesting, which was a turning point for me, he asked us, “Well, do you guys talk about anything except music?” And I said to him, “No, we’re always busy talking about music, or our family, or something like that. We never go beyond that into politics.” He said, “Well, that’s the wrong way

¹⁵⁵ Marck, interview.

to be because if you have the commitment to each other through your music, you should be talking politics because you're the ones who have a right to talk about politics." And that's also something that I heard from Yair Dalal, who played *'ud* in the ensemble for a while. He also said to me right at the beginning, "Look, I know you're lost and you can't figure anything out [in the Middle Eastern music]. You should just go to Yafo [Jaffe], and you should buy tape cassettes, and just listen. Listen to the radio in Arabic. Listen just to kind of get it in your ear." So we went out, and we played in schools in Yafo. And the teachers came back and they told Yair, "You know, the kids just loved the double bass." And one of the teachers came up and he said, "Listen, you can't come to Yafo because if you walk around Yafo now, you know, you'll be mobbed by kids." And Yair said to me an interesting thing, "You see, you can walk around Yafo, you can walk around an Arab village, because you've done something genuine between Jews and Arabs. You've kind of earned a place." Which is also what Yehuda Pearl is saying, that when you have this commitment to each other as musicians, you can talk about the politics. And the next day we had a five hour flight, and Ramsis and I sat together and we talked the whole way [about] politics, which is also a revelation to me.¹⁵⁶

Yehuda Pearl told Peter and Ramsis that they should be talking about politics because they worked together as musicians and were friends. Yair Dalal said much the same thing, telling Peter that by playing Arab music with Arabs and for Arabs, Peter showed that he genuinely respected the music and the people and could thus be accepted by many of them. Once respect, trust, and friendship exist between the Arab and Jewish musicians, the next step is to talk about sensitive issues (politics). Politics in Israel includes civil rights and government policies (i.e., treatment of Arabs within Israel, and relations with the Palestinian territories and other countries in the Middle East). These are hot-button issues that tend to set Jews and Arabs in Israel against one another, as each side feels wronged and threatened by the other. However, by building trusting

¹⁵⁶ Marck, interview.

relationships through musical collaboration, Pearl and Dalal assert that the musicians of Shesh Besh (and of The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra) open the door to political discussions, rather than arguments. They can hear the other's point of view without feeling (as) threatened.

Through music's place as a shared interest for the Arab and Jewish musicians in Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, the musicians are able to start a dialog in a more neutral arena than politics. Add to this music's use in many cultures to enhance meaning and communication and its use as a communal activity, and it seems that it could indeed lead to more communication and trust between Arab and Jewish musicians and their audiences.

But is music a form of communication? Is it possible for these ensembles to use music to communicate their message of coexistence, or is the act of music-making more important? I argue that Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra combine repertoire and performance to pursue their goals. Peter Martin writes in *Sounds and Society* that musical meanings "are created, sustained and transformed through human interaction."¹⁵⁷ Performing Western and Middle Eastern musics sends a message to the musicians and audience, but that message is dependent on what an audience sees, reads, hears spoken, and interprets. Thus, in order to use music to convey their message of Arab-Jewish coexistence, the ensembles depend on other forms of communication to enhance, and to be enhanced by, the musical message.

¹⁵⁷ Peter J. Martin, *Sounds and Society: Themes in the Sociology of Music* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 30.

In a live performance, body language and the visual image of musicians performing together can back up the musical message. When the musicians smile, lean toward one another, and make eye contact with one another and the audience, they communicate their ease with the other musicians and the audience, Arab and Jewish. By mixing Arabs and Jews on stage, they visually illustrate the combination of Arab and Jewish, Western and Middle Eastern, musics. On their CDs, the ensembles also use visual cues such as pictures of the musicians and art to enhance the music. In live performances or on recordings, written and spoken language is incredibly important. Program notes, CD liner notes, and spoken word are all used to place the music in a proper cultural context. Then, the music, through its emotional content and communal nature, further enhances the verbal and visual messages. For instance, both Shesh Besh's and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra's interpretations of *Shibolet Ba'sade* combine Western, Middle Eastern, Jewish, and Arab musical elements that are recognizable to these different groups. They also use techniques like timbre (e.g. the *ney* solo in Shesh Besh's arrangement) and dance-like rhythms to elicit an emotional response from performers and audience members alike, whether it is a peaceful feeling during the *ney* solo or tapping one's foot during the dance-like sections. This emotional response can enhance the response to other expressions of the ensembles' goals, like language or art.

Language is a cultural construct, just as is music. Language is created and used by different cultures to express ideas and is unique to different cultures, like music. Martin writes that, "the meaning of words, phrases, whole sentences even, depends on the ways

in which they are *used* [emphasis in original].”¹⁵⁸ Combining language and music to communicate a specific message is possible (and is often done in politics, advertising, entertainment, and many other areas). However, these messages are dependent on one’s perception of the music and language used. Hearing a speech in Hebrew that is supposed to add meaning to a musical performance is not likely to communicate a specific message to me because I cannot understand the collection of sounds that constitute the Hebrew language. However, if the music is accompanied by a speech in English, I am more likely to understand the message. Additionally, the English words often increase my understanding of the meaning behind the music, heightening my enjoyment and comprehension of the performance (musical and verbal) as a whole.

Brinner argues that music can appeal to people and show them how cultures can combine but still maintain their autonomy.¹⁵⁹ When you add the interaction of the musicians onstage and the language they use to describe the ensembles and their goals, you see human communication and trust, backing and being backed by the musical message of teamwork and autonomy. The various forms of communication can combine to present a more powerful message than they could alone.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 39.

¹⁵⁹ Brinner, subsection: “Performing Coexistence,” 2.

Contact, Communication, and Trust

War and conflict destroy more than lives and property. They destroy cultures and identities, which often re-form around the negative experiences of conflict.¹⁶⁰ In order to rebuild identities, individuals must communicate with one another. Mahmoud Hussein, an Arab participant in a published Arab-Jewish dialogue, expanded on the words of Jewish Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, saying, “‘Peace will not be made by governments, but by the peoples’ The agreements made between the leaders will have no value other than the value the peoples give them, and will endure only to the extent that the peoples accept one another.”¹⁶¹ Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra provide a way for Arabs and Jews to find a common identity, to communicate with one another, and to build a foundation for further Arab-Jewish dialogue.

Contact with one another is an important part of building communication and trust in these groups. Contact with the “other,” whether it is in a rehearsal or as an audience member at a performance, makes that “other” seem more human. Instead of grouping all Arabs or all Jews into stereotyped groups, one can begin to see unique individuals who have human emotions and needs. Further, Peter points out that playing music together is a personal commitment for musicians, not just to the music but also to their fellow performers.¹⁶² Peter saw this commitment after an AFIPO member, who supported Shesh

¹⁶⁰ Maja Povržanović and Renata Jambrešić Kirin, “Negotiating Identities? The Voices of Refugees between Experience and Representation,” in *War, Exile, Everyday Life: Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Renata Jambrešić Kirin and Maja Povržanović (Zagreb, Croatia: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, 1996), 9.

¹⁶¹ Friedländer and Hussein, 123-124.

¹⁶² Marck, interview.

Besh's mission wholeheartedly, was killed in the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center. After September 11, many people in the United States and abroad blamed and mistrusted Arabs as a blanket ethnic group. However, because they knew some Arabs personally, the Jewish members of Shesh Besh didn't fall into this trap. Instead, the musicians—Arab and Jewish—talked about the attacks. They were able to see each other's points of view because they knew each other. This acceptance of one another extended to the Israeli war with Hezbollah in the summer of 2006, when the musicians could speak about the conflict without blaming one another.

Communication of this sort can lead to trust, as Meir points out. He believes that trust can be developed if Arabs and Jews can “mingle and . . . cooperate and . . . do things together, things that are not necessarily connected to conflict.”¹⁶³ Playing music together is an activity that is not necessarily connected with the Arab-Jewish conflict. Playing music also provides another advantage: time. It takes time to rehearse and refine pieces before they can be performed. It takes time to travel together to perform concerts. This time is vital to building trust. Meir tells of how time gradually brought about his friendship with Wisam Gibran:

When we started to work in the beginning, there was a lot of suspicion between us. He suspected that I [would] only use him to prepare the orchestra and then . . . throw him away and conduct it myself. And I suspected that he [was] using the orchestra just to . . . make a step forward in his career, and would probably not pursue it. And this brought us quite a lot to, you know, fighting and slamming doors to each other, and things like that. It took us about one year, this tense

¹⁶³ Wiesel, interview.

situation where at times I even thought about firing him. But probably he and [I] had to try to continue despite, and after one year things improved a lot, and since then we are friends. And there's not one problem which we don't solve with harmony and just working together . . . because we are now secure, we feel secure with one another, and there is trust. That's a big step forward.¹⁶⁴

The correlation between contact, communication, and trust has the potential to lead to respect, and perhaps genuine friendships and changes in views in these ensembles. I wrote earlier of music as a communicative art, which allows musicians and audiences a chance to meet and spend time with the "other." But does this mean that music, and the act of making music, can promote communication and trust in Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra?

Beyond Music

For receptive musicians and audience members, musical performance can promote communication and build trust. Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra can encourage communication among their Jewish and Arab ensemble members, and can show their model to audiences through live performances and recordings. If it is possible to use music in this way, can other media be used to achieve similar ends?

Peter, at least, is not so sure. In our e-mail correspondence, he wrote:

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

Music has common roots deeply “hard-wired” in all of us. The audience picks up on what is good music, what is well-played, what we are communicating to each other during the performance. Unlike other art forms, the players are providing the energy which is actively “engaging” the listener. The Plastic arts demand all the energy to come from the viewer. Literature demands a high level of language skills. Theater is often too provocative or religiously offensive. Music usually hits a good spot in people, and if used effectively, can be very powerful, and lead to positive confrontations of people and cultures.¹⁶⁵

On some counts, I agree with what Peter says. I do believe that an audience can notice musician communication during a performance, especially if they receive basic information about the ensemble and its music in a program, lecture, etc. I also agree that music’s place as an active, “engaging” art form is important. The musicians must interact with each other to create a musical product. The audience must engage in the performance through listening (and often watching) to fully enjoy the music and/or to understand the Arab-Jewish collaboration. Finally, I believe that Peter is right that music, if used effectively, can lead to positive communication between Arabs and Jews. Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra perform works of the West and Middle East that many Jews and Arabs can relate to, and perhaps feel is “theirs.” Playing familiar music, along with new styles, can serve to validate each side and its music and to open each side to new musics and ideas. In this way, music can lead to positive communication as each side feels more secure in itself and develops appreciation for the other.

Music shares some of these qualities with other media, and I disagree with Peter when he states that art, literature, or theater might not work as well as music. As with

¹⁶⁵ Marck, correspondence, 25 June 2007.

music, it depends on how these media are used. It is true that art and literature are usually not active art forms, as mentioned earlier, but they can challenge people to think about new possibilities.¹⁶⁶ Theater, like music, is an active art form, requiring that performers interact to create a finished product and that audiences view something happening “now,” and I believe it could be used like music to promote communication. In fact, theater is being used in Israel to bring Jewish and Arab actors together to meet, work together, and express their feeling through their art. Mariane Pearl profiles one theater project that brings together Arab and Jewish young people in Northern Israel to act together in her article, “Global Diary: Israel.”¹⁶⁷ Jewish Israeli Angelica Edna Calo Livne founded the Arcobaleno-Rainbow Theater in 2002. She and the young Arab and Jewish members cite success similar to that of the musical projects, encouraging the artists to speak to one another and to the audience and to build trusting relationships.

Sports are another area in which this kind of collaborative activity can take place. Again, how sports are used is important. An organization called Playing for Peace is working on just such a project with basketball.¹⁶⁸ Wisam Matanis wrote, “sports [are] also good but music is better because in sports we play against each other, but we play music together [underlines in original e-mail correspondence].”¹⁶⁹ Sports do tend to be competitive (though one could argue that music is also a highly competitive field).

¹⁶⁶ Music recordings function in much the same way as art and literature, eliciting a response, though perhaps less active/interactive than live music performances.

¹⁶⁷ Mariane Pearl, “Global Diary: Israel,” *Glamour* (February 2008): 138, 140-141, 229.

¹⁶⁸ Franz Lidz, Mark Betchel, and Steven Cannella, “Hoops Diplomacy,” *Sports Illustrated*, 102:19 (9 May 2005), accessed 8 January 2008, University of North Carolina-Greensboro, EBSCOHost database.

¹⁶⁹ Matanis, correspondence.

However, it would be possible to form Arab-Jewish sports teams, where Jews and Arabs play alongside each other on the same team. This could create a strong team identity, similar to the ensemble identities of Shesh Besh or The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, which could lead to more communication between Jewish and Arab teammates. Sports tend to evoke an emotional reaction in audiences, similar to music, so the potential to influence the thoughts and beliefs of audience members is similar to the potential in musical performance.

Meir also asserted that Arabs and Jews can meet and communicate as a result of working together, for instance on a construction job.¹⁷⁰ Again, Jews and Arabs working together, whether in music, construction, or business, have regular contact, which can lead to respect and even friendship. Meir also spoke of taking classes and attending workshops on conflict resolution with other Jews and Arabs.¹⁷¹ These types of meetings can be another chance for Arabs and Jews in Israel to build relationships and communicate with one another. Attending these classes inspired Meir to begin studying Arabic. For Meir, this is a way to show respect for Arabs and their culture, and to communicate with them in Arabic as well as Hebrew (and often English).

Thus, music is not the only medium that can be used to promote Arab-Jewish communication and trust. Arts, sports, and other areas, can provide an opportunity for Israeli Jews and Arabs to meet and speak. There are strengths and limitations in each of these areas, just as for music. Different activities will appeal to different people, so a

¹⁷⁰ Wiesel, interview.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

variety of Arab-Jewish projects in different fields have the potential to influence more people. There will always be extremists on both sides who cannot be reached by any effort in any field to promote communication and trust. However, that does not mean that these activities should stop.

Measuring Success

Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra share a common goal to promote communication between Israeli Jews and Arabs. Measuring their success in achieving this goal is difficult. The ensembles tend to measure success in several ways: by looking at the relationships between the musicians, by judging audience acceptance of the projects, and by the longevity of the ensembles. Touring in the United States and Europe, receiving awards, and selling CDs are other ways to measure success, especially for financial backers.

One way to judge success is to look at the audiences. Brinner points out that measuring success based solely on the number of audience members is deceptive.¹⁷² It is just as important to observe how receptive the audience is to the project, and to consider whether the project is emulated elsewhere. Looking at Shesh Besh and the youth orchestra in this way, I see success. The performances I attended were warmly received. Many of the musicians with whom I spoke told me that their audiences are often quite receptive to, and even excited about, the projects. Both ensembles hope that others like

¹⁷² Brinner, subsection: "Performing Coexistence," 1.

them will spring up throughout Israel, integrating Arab and Jewish members. Yossi and Meir pointed out that there are music camps where young Arab and Jewish musicians are beginning to meet and play together.¹⁷³ Many camps take place in various locations in Israel. Yossi was teaching at a music camp in Herzliyah, a suburb of Tel Aviv, when I visited Israel in mid-July, and though the camp's purpose was not to bring Arabs and Jews together, he was proud of the fact that young Arab musicians were starting to attend. Through JMI, Meir also hosts music camps for Arabs and Jews in Israel. Other organizations, such as Seeds for Peace and Givat Haviva, also sponsor camps for young Israeli Arabs and Jews, in music and other areas. Seeds for Peace hosts camps in music, theater, and language (Hebrew, Arabic) in Jerusalem, several other cities in Israel, and in the West Bank.¹⁷⁴ Givat Haviva also sponsors a music camp at their campus, which is located in north central Israel.¹⁷⁵

One can also measure success through the recognition these ensembles receive. Both are funded by international interests, who are backing Arab-Jewish communication just as much as they are backing musical performance. While I was in Israel, the members of Shesh Besh received the 2007 KulturForum Europa Tolerance Award for their work in promoting Arab-Jewish communication, an important recognition of the ensemble's efforts.

¹⁷³ Arnheim, interview. Wiesel, interview.

¹⁷⁴ "Seeds for Peace: Advanced Coexistence Programs," website, accessed 26 February 2008, available at <http://www.seedsofpeace.org/node/1770>.

¹⁷⁵ "Givat Haviva Educational Foundation, Inc.: Programs, Children and Youth," website, accessed 26 February 2008, available at <http://www.givathaviva.org/Page/41>.

Just staying together is a measure of success for these ensembles. The fact that Meir and Wisam Gibran continued to work together in spite of personal differences and insecurities and slowly built a friendship is a success for the youth orchestra. Young musicians continue to join and perform with the youth orchestra. Shesh Besh has been together for several years, with few changes in personnel.

Perhaps the most important measure of success is the reaction to the ensembles. Arnheim told me that Shesh Besh “opened a world for me that I really didn’t know.”¹⁷⁶ He was excited about Shesh Besh, both for its musical challenges and the chance to meet Arab musicians. All of the musicians with whom I spoke had similar things to say. These ensembles give the musicians a chance to enjoy new musics with new friends. Peter told me that, “each member of the ensemble is happy that they’re a part of it beyond . . . material things [such as repertoire, money, publicity, etc.]. We’re all committed to it on a personal level, and that’s a very positive thing you can say about any ensemble.”¹⁷⁷

These ensembles cannot physically reach every single Israeli, and they cannot always change the way people think. They can begin to wear down tensions between some Israeli Arabs and Jews, and they can even lead to trusting relationships. Peter believes that the “one-to-one level” of change may be bigger than we think.¹⁷⁸ He points out that it is not always easy to see that anything is being accomplished in these ensembles, but the friendships that grow from them are a step forward. He says that, “if

¹⁷⁶ Arnheim, interview.

¹⁷⁷ Marck, interview.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

everyone [sees these new friendships] then maybe that is a world-changer because it's an excuse for contact with another culture.”¹⁷⁹

By looking at audience reaction, recognition, longevity as ensembles, and the emotional impact on musicians and audience members, one can see a pattern of success for Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra. Both ensembles promote communication and foster trust among their members, and these benefits can, and sometimes do, extend to the audience. These small steps forward are important to the musicians, who believe in these projects. As time goes on, they hope to see further success as new ensembles form to emulate their Arab-Jewish makeup. As Irit put it, these ensembles do not do much on their own, “but at least it's something.”¹⁸⁰ The hope is that these small contributions can inspire more small contributions and perhaps enact change step by step.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Rub-Levy, interview.

CHAPTER VI

“SOME THINGS YOU JUST FEEL”

“What do you do when both sides are right?”¹⁸¹ Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra answer this question by getting both sides together. In a country where Arabs and Jews tend to live separately, meeting is an important first step. The ensembles do this through mixing their membership and traveling throughout Israel to perform for Arab and Jewish audiences.

The ensembles combine Western classical, Middle Eastern art and folk, and new works that combine these elements to provide musical interest for the performers and to reinforce the idea of Arab-Jewish collaboration through music. They also present visual images through their on-stage appearances, during which they mix Jewish and Arab members on stage, and through their CDs, where they use cover art to catch attention and promote their Arab-Jewish membership and music.

Music provides a common ground for the musicians. Sometimes they share musical roots. For example, Sami studied Western classical and Arab art and folk music, so he shares musics with musicians proficient in any of these styles. Other times, they must teach each other new styles and ideas. Peter points out that the Jewish musicians “want to play Eastern music like [the Arab musicians] play it. And when we play

¹⁸¹ See Chapter One opening quote.

Western music, we want them to play Western music like we play it.”¹⁸² Music is a common ground because the musicians share a love for music and similar levels of proficiency, but it also highlights differences and requires that the musicians communicate with one another through music and words to produce a refined performance. Sami put it this way:

The differences, which are very interesting, in the style and the interpretation of each one, each side, and to find the common denominator is a very interesting thing. This is something that you have to learn and to know how to do because it’s very sensitive. You can just do this combination wrong, and it will sound very bad.¹⁸³

Sami speaks of doing “this combination wrong,” which refers to combining musical styles and musicians. If you combine styles unsuccessfully, the musical product will sound bad. If you combine musicians unsuccessfully (e.g. musicians are not open to new musics or the other musicians’ ideas), again, the music will sound bad. The success of these projects is not a given, but rather a result of hard work by the musicians, composers, and arrangers. Musical differences and similarities come together to create a challenge for the musicians. To create a musical product that does not “sound very bad,” they must work together, communicating musically and verbally. Music can act as a form of communication when used with other types of communication, such as speech or visual arts. Through this combination, the different media enhance one another.

¹⁸² Marck, interview.

¹⁸³ Khshiboun, interview.

Small Steps

It is possible to dismiss the activities of Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra. One can first question whether they reach enough people. After all, these ensembles have played for only a small percentage of Israelis. There will always be those who cannot or will not hear the message of communication and trust presented by these ensembles. One can also question whether these groups reach the right people. Both concentrate on young people. The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra consists of young Israelis, and Shesh Besh performs primarily for schoolchildren. Are these young people *too* young to make a difference, or are they the best place to start? These are large questions that I am not prepared to address here, but they have a bearing on how one perceives these projects and others like them in the future. Whom these ensembles reach affects their financial support and their ability to schedule concerts. In the coming years, observing the ensembles, their ability to stay together, their ability to influence other Arab-Jewish groups, and their support from the Israeli community (and the European and American communities), will provide proof of the ensembles' effectiveness. Additionally, time will make more clear who supports these ensembles (and who is not), shedding light on their impact on Arab-Jewish relations in Israel.

Additionally, we must consider the possible problematic interpretations or effects of these ensembles. Language, musical styles, marketing, and sponsorship can all present a positively, negatively, or ambivalently interpreted image. Language can serve to divide the musicians into categories rather than present them as a cohesive group. When one labels one musician as an Arab and another as a Jew, rather than identifying the

ensembles as diverse groups of musicians, one highlights difference over similarity. Musical styles of the West and Middle East can be used and combined in a way that emphasizes one over the other in some people's minds. For instance, one may interpret Shesh Besh's arrangement of *Shibolet Ba'sade* as a combination of Jewish and Arab musical ideas, accentuating the combination of Jewish and Arab musicians, or one may understand the piece as an Orientalist combination of Western and Middle Eastern musical styles.

Marketing can target one group, while leaving another out. For example, both ensembles use English to describe their efforts in the liner notes of their CDs. This targets Americans and Europeans, who often provide financial support for the ensembles. Writing in English does not leave out all Israelis, many of whom are bi- or trilingual, but one can interpret that it prioritizes English over Hebrew or Arabic, and thus Western audiences over many Middle Eastern ones. Reading that the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, a Jewish ensemble that performs Western classical music, sponsors Shesh Besh can lead some to believe that the Arab musicians and their musics are being racialized or colonized by a more powerful Jewish organization. Similarly, The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra's sponsor, Jeunesses Musicales International, is a European organization that some may not trust to represent Israelis' interests. One could question whether the ensembles' efforts at Arab-Jewish communication will appeal to many Israelis, since they are sponsored by large organizations and perform art and folk, rather than popular musics. Can Israelis relate to the music and the musicians? In all these

cases, assessments of the groups are based on individual perception and/or group mentality, which can differ from what the musicians believe and try to convey.

I believe these ensembles succeed in their goals because they have shared their message with *some* Israelis and continue to play together, trying to reach more Israelis. While the ensembles are sponsored by large organizations and do not perform popular music, they have encouraged regular Israeli citizens to interact and build friendships. What may have started as a from-the-top-down nod to the peace process from powerful organizations is now a genuine community effort at building Arab-Jewish communication and trust for some Israelis. The musicians of Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra have created communities where a shared interest in music encourages musicians to interact. They do not just rehearse and perform together, though they enjoy these activities. They also talk about their lives, their hopes, their families, and even about politics. For instance, Peter pointed out that the musicians of Shesh Besh get to talk a lot when they travel together, and as their friendships grow, they branch out from talking about music, to family, and finally to politics.¹⁸⁴ They sometimes rehearse in each other's homes, which combines rehearsal and social time in a way that a rehearsal at the Mann Auditorium might not.¹⁸⁵

Again, individual perception of sponsorships and musical messages varies, but the musicians see these ensembles as communities where Arabs and Jews can meet, perform together, speak, and build trusting relationships. Success in this case is not based on a

¹⁸⁴ Marck, interview.

¹⁸⁵ Marck, correspondence, 7 April 2008.

final product that one can see and touch, but on a continuing process of communication. There is a poetic element to this view, in that the success of these ensembles resembles the music they play: in both cases, the act, the process, whether it is of living together or of playing together, is the product.

The Middle East is fraught with conflict, and tension between Arabs and Jews in Israel is a central focus of peace efforts in the region. Diplomatic efforts to broker peace between Israelis and Palestinians have failed numerous times, leaving Israeli Arabs and Jews in a politically difficult limbo, unable to move beyond conflict to trust one another as fellow citizens. In 1993, it looked as if peace might at last be achieved when Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin signed what was to be the first of several peace agreements. Since then, Rabin's assassination (1995), the second intifada (2000), continuing hostilities in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and the war with Hezbollah (2006) have eroded Arab-Jewish relations still further.

Wisam Matanis told me: "I believe that true peace starts between the two nations, and not between the two leaders."¹⁸⁶ In other words, peace cannot solely be administered from the top down through a signed treaty; it must also be built on the efforts of ordinary people. Even if political leaders negotiated a peace agreement, the people would need to embrace peace. Rabin's assassination shows that a common person who holds no elected post and wields limited political power can undermine the best intentions of a leader. This is why these ensembles, and other efforts like them, are important. They can potentially build a foundation for eventual peace. Like any effort at reconciliation or

¹⁸⁶ Matanis, correspondence.

communication, these ensembles and their use of music as a tool to promote communication, must be accepted, at least by some Israelis. Because of their place in the Arab-Jewish conflict in Israel, these ensembles are political statements and thus must balance top-down funding and sponsorship (necessary for their survival) with appealing to Israeli Jews and Arabs (necessary for their message of communication). Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra might not bring peace, but they can, and do, bring some Arabs and Jews together.

The small steps forward that Shesh Besh, The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, and other projects like them take in promoting communication and trust between Israeli Arabs and Jews are just that, small. In the United States, we hear far more about violence in the Middle East than reconciliatory efforts. That does not mean reconciliatory efforts are not taking place. The musicians with whom I spoke are committed to these ensembles, musically and socially. If nothing else, this is an important step. It is difficult for an outsider to appreciate the impact and importance of these ensembles, much less to explain them in words, but as a musician, I know that words are not always enough. Sometimes words need a little help, and music can provide that. Sami puts it this way: “[It’s] a very special experience. Some things you can describe in words, and some things you just feel.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷ Khshiboun, interview.

Further Research

I have barely scratched the surface with this research. Over the long term, it will be important to maintain contact with the members of these ensembles. More information on audience reaction is also needed. Finding and investigating other Arab-Jewish ensembles in Israel will expand the picture I have painted here, filling in details.

I plan to return to Israel to speak with musicians I have already met and those I did not get to interview on my first research trip. I will attend more rehearsals and performances and begin interviewing audience members. I will continue to ask whether music can promote communication and trust, but I plan to expand the scope of my research to include audience answers to this question and investigations of other ensembles. There are other ensembles of this sort in Israel, and I will begin to investigate them in addition to Shesh Besh and the youth orchestra. Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra are both ensembles founded by Jewish organizations. I hope to discover ensembles organized by Arab Israelis and ensembles that are not backed by large organizations to obtain a more complete picture of Israel's musical diversity.

Additionally, I will explore the religious complexities of the Arab-Jewish conflict in Israel. I will ask more questions about religious beliefs and opinions of musicians and audience members. I will also continue to study the religious conflict in Israel, especially as it centers on Jerusalem. Finding Arab-Jewish ensembles in Jerusalem has potential to shed light on communication between those of different religious backgrounds and strongly held religious beliefs.

The West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, an ensemble made up of Jews and Arabs from many Middle Eastern nations, is a project founded by Edward Said and Daniel Barenboim. It is similar to Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra in that it combines Arab and Jewish members. It is also an ensemble that focuses many of its efforts on young people, like the ensembles I have studied. Unlike Shesh Besh and the youth orchestra, however, The West-Eastern Divan plays only Western classical music. Its membership is from many areas of the Middle East, not just Israel, and it is based in Spain, rather than the Middle East. Exploring the similarities and differences between The West-Eastern Divan, and Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra, can address music and communication, but it can also bring up many new subjects for study, such as the importance of repertoire and location to these ensembles. By expanding the scope of my research beyond Israel, I will be asking new questions. Does the physical location of these ensembles matter? Is Israel a better location than Spain, or does location matter at all? I will also compare projects that focus on different musics. While Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra play Western classical and Middle Eastern art and folk styles, The West-Eastern Divan focuses solely on Western classical music. Does the style(s) of music performed make a difference for the musicians? Is one style better than another at promoting trust and communication? Who are the audiences for these varying styles of music, and how does appealing to audiences with music affect these projects, what they play, and where they play?

One can also study music's potential uses in promoting communication and trust beyond Israel. Looking at other volatile areas, such as Iraq, Kenya, or Serbia, can expand

our perspective. In these cases, determining who the musicians are, who the audience members are, and what is being performed, will be important. In the ensembles I studied, the Arab-Jewish combination of musicians is more important than mixing audiences, at least for now. The combination of Western and Middle Eastern musics reflects the Arab-Jewish makeup of the ensembles. Research into music and communication in Israel and beyond can supplement conflict resolution research. It also contributes to a large body of literature on music and communication.

Music is not the only medium one can use to promote communication. Other arts, sports, classes, and workshops can also be used in this way. Studies in these other areas, in Israel and beyond, can shed light on efforts at coexistence, conflict resolution, and different forms of communication.

Through my research, I have learned to focus on the people involved in these projects. What do they have to say? What do they feel? I have used their words, whenever possible, to explain what Shesh Besh and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra are trying to achieve. It is important to focus on the human elements of these projects in future research on music or other areas. Hear what the participants have to say, and realize that, as Sami said, “Some things you can describe in words, and some things you just feel.”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

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APPENDIX A
LIST OF MUSICIANS
(ALPHABETICAL BY LAST NAME)

Yossi Arnheim, principal flutist with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Western flutist with Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble.

Saida Bar-Lev, violinist/violist for Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble.

Wisam Gibran, conductor and arranger for The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra.

Alfred Hajjar, *ney* player and composer in Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble.

Ramsis Kasis, *'udist* for Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble.

Sami Khshiboun, violinist with Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble.

Peter Marck, double bassist with the Israel Philharmonic and with Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble.

Wisam Matanis, violinist with The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra.

Zubin Mehta, conductor of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.

Bishara Naddaf, percussionist and composer for Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble.

Irit Rub-Levy, director of Keynote, the music education program of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. A manager of Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble.

Haya Samir, singer and composer for Shesh Besh/The Arab-Jewish Ensemble.

Meir Wiesel, director of Jeunesses Musicales Israel and The Arab-Jewish Youth Orchestra.

APPENDIX B

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

- *Darbuka/tablah*- a membranophone (drum). It is a goblet-shaped drum that can produce a number of different sounds on its single head.
- *Ney/nay*- an aerophone (wind instrument). It is an end-blown reed flute. It has six finger holes and one thumb hole. The instrument comes in different lengths, which play in different registers.
- *'ud/oud*- a chordophone (stringed instrument). It is a short-necked lute, with a rounded body. The strings are plucked or strummed with a quill plectrum. It easily produces microtones, which are an important part of *maqamat*.
- *Riq/Deff/Duff* - a membranophone and an idiophone. It is much like a Western tambourine. Vibrations occur on the skin head and through the metal discs circling the instrument. It can produce a variety of different sounds.
- *Violin/Kaman*- The violin has been adapted by Middle Eastern musicians to play *maqam*. This instrument can be played in a Western or Middle Eastern style.
- *Qanun*- a chordophone (stringed instrument). It is a zither, with 25 to 27 courses of strings. The strings are usually plucked. It produces the microtones essential for many *maqamat* with the help of a set of small levers.

Pictures, descriptions, and playing demonstrations of the *darbuka/tablah*, *ney*, *'ud*, *riq*, *kaman*, and *qanun* can be found at:

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